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THE SCALP HUNTERS;

OR,

ROMANTIC ADVENTURES IN NORTHERN MEXICO.

BY

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THE "RIFLE RANGERS."

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THE SCALP-HUNTERS;

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CHAPTER I.

THE BARRANCA.

We staked our horses upon the open plain; and, returning to the thicket, cut down wood, and kindled fires. We felt secure. Our pursuers, even had they escaped back to the valley, could not now reach us, except by turning the mountains, or waiting for the falling of the flood!

We knew that that would be as sudden as its rise, should the rain cease; but the storm still raged with unabated fury.

We could soon overtake the atajo; but we determined to remain for some time at the cañon, until men and horses had refreshed themselves by eating. Both were in need of food, as the hurried events of the preceding days had given no opportunity for a regular bivouack.

The fires were soon blazing under shelter of the overhanging rocks; and the dried meat was broiled for our suppers, and eaten with sufficient relish. Supper ended, we sat, with smoking garments, around the red embers. Several of the men had received wounds. These were rudely dressed by their comrades—the doctor having gone forward with the atajo.

We remained for several hours by the cañon. The tempest still played around us, and the water rose higher and higher. This was exactly what we wished for; and we had the satisfaction of seeing the flood increase to such a height that, as Rube assured

us, it could not subside for hours. It was then resolved that we should continue our journey.

It was near midnight, when we drew our pickets and rode off. The rain had partially blinded the trail made by El Sol and his party; but the men who now followed it were not much used to guide posts; and Rube, acting as leader, lifted it, at a trot. At intervals the flashes of lightning showed the mule tracks in the mud, and the white peak that beaconed us in the distance.

We travelled all night. An hour after sunrise we overtook the atajo, near the base of the snow mountain. We halted in the mountain pass; and, after a short while spent in cooking and eating breakfast, continued our journey across the Sierra. The road led through a dry ravine, into an open plain, that stretched east and south beyond the reach of our vision. It was a desert.

* * * *

I will not detail the events that occurred to us in the passage of that terrible *jornada*. They were similar to those we experienced in the deserts to the west. We suffered from thirst, making one stretch of sixty miles without water. We passed over sage-covered plains, without a living object to break the death-like monotony that extended around us. We cooked our meals over the blaze of the *artemisia*. But our provisions gave out; and the pack-mules, one by one, fell under the knives of the hungry hunters. By night we camped without fires. We dared not kindle them; for though, as yet, no pursuers had appeared, we knew they must be on our trail. We had travelled with such speed, that they had not been able to come up with us.

For three days we headed toward the south-east. On the evening of the third

we descried the Mimbres mountains towering up on the eastern border of the desert. The peaks of these were well known to the hunters, and became our guides as we journeyed on.

We approached the Mimbres in a diagonal direction, as it was our purpose to pass through the Sierra by the route of the old mine—once the prosperous property of our chief. To him, every feature of the landscape was a familiar object. I observed that his spirits rose as we proceeded onward.

At sundown we reached the head of the Barranca del Oro—a vast cleft that traversed the plain, leading down to the deserted mine. This chasm, like the fissure of some terrible earthquake, extended for a distance of twenty miles. On either side was a trail; for on both the table-plain ran in horizontally to the very lips of the abyss. About midway to the mine, on

the left brow, the guide knew of a spring, and we proceeded toward this with the intention of camping by the water.

We dragged wearily along. It was near midnight when we arrived at the spring. Our horses were unsaddled and staked on the open plain.

Here Seguin had resolved that we should rest longer than usual. A feeling of security had come over him as he approached these well remembered scenes.

There was a thicket of young cotton trees and willows fringing the spring, and in the heart of this a fire was kindled. Another mule was sacrificed to the manes of hunger; and the hunters, after devouring the tough steaks, flung themselves upon the ground, and slept. The horse-guard only—out by the *Caballada*—stood leaning upon his rifle silent and watchful.

Resting my head in the hollow of my saddle, I lay down by the fire. Seguin was

near me, with his daughter. The Mexican girls and the Indian captives lay clustered over the ground, wrapped in their tilmas and striped blankets. They were all asleep, or seemed so.

I was wearied as the rest, but my thoughts kept me awake. My mind was busy with the bright future. "Soon," thought I, "shall I escape from these horrid scenes. Soon shall I breathe a purer atmosphere, in the sweet companionship of my beloved Zöe. Beautiful Zöe! before two days shall have passed, I will again be with you—hold you to my bosom—press your impassioned lips—call you my loved—my own! Again shall we wander through the silent garden by the river groves—again shall we sit upon the moss-grown seats in the still evening hours—again shall we utter those wild words that caused our hearts to vibrate with a mutual happiness! Zöe pure and innocent—as the angels!

The child-like simplicity of that question—"Enrique, what is to marry?" Ah! sweet Zöe, you shall soon learn. Ere long shall I teach you. Ere long wilt thou be mine—for ever mine!

Zöe! Zöe! are you awake? Do you lie sleepless on your soft couch? or am I present in your dreams? Do you long for my return, as *I* to hasten it? Oh! that the night were past! I cannot wait for rest. I could ride on sleepless—tireless—on—on!"

My eye rested upon the features of Adele, upturned and shining in the blaze of the fire. I traced the outlines of her sister's face — the high noble front, the arched eyebrow, and the curving nostril. But the brightness of complexion was not there—the smile of angelic innocence was not there! The hair was dark, the skin browned; and there was a wildness in the expression of the eye, stamped, no doubt, by the experience of many a sa-

vage scene. Still was she beautiful, but it was beauty of a far less spiritual order, than that of my betrothed.

Her bosom rose and fell in short irregular pulsations. Once or twice, while I was gazing, she half awaked, and muttered some words in the Indian tongue. Her sleep was troubled and broken.

During the journey, Seguin had waited upon her with all the tender solicitude of a father; but she had received his attentions with indifference, or at most regarded them with a cold thankfulness. It was difficult to analyze the feelings that actuated her. Most of the time, she remained silent and sullen.

The father endeavoured, once or twice, to resuscitate the memories of her childhood, but without success; and with sorrow at his heart he had each time relinquished the attempt.

I thought he was asleep. I was mistaken. On looking more attentively in his face I saw

that he was regarding her, with deep interest, and listening to the broken phrases that fell from her lips. There was a picture of sorrow, and anxiety, in his look that touched me to the heart.

As I watched him, the girl murmured some words—to me unintelligible—but among them I recognised the name "Dacoma."

I saw that Seguin started as he heard it.

"Poor child!" said he, seeing that I was awake, "she is dreaming, and a troubled dream it is. I have half a mind to wake her out of it."

"She needs rest," I replied.

"Aye—if that be rest. Listen! again "Dacoma!"

"It is the name of the captive chief."

"Aye; they were to have been married —according to their laws."

"But how did you learn this?"

"From Rube—he heard it while he was a prisoner at the town."

"And did she love him, do you think?"

"No. It appears not. She had been adopted as the daughter of the medicine chief, and Dacoma claimed her for a wife. On certain considerations she was to have been given to him; but she feared, not loved him, as her words now testify. Poor child! a wayward fate has been hers."

"In two journeys more, her sufferings will be over. She will be restored to her home—to her mother."

"Ah! if she should remain thus it will break the heart of my poor Adele."

"Fear not, my friend. Time will restore her memory. I think I have heard of a parallel circumstance among the frontier settlements of the Mississippi."

"Oh! true; there have been many. We will hope for the best."

"Once in her home, the objects that surrounded her in her younger days may

strike a chord in her recollection. She may yet remember all. May she not?"

"Hope—hope."

"At all events the companionship of her mother and sister will soon win her from the thoughts of savage life. Fear not! She will be your daughter again."

I urged these ideas for the purpose of giving consolation. Seguin made no reply; but I saw that the painful and anxious expression still remained, all clouding his features.

My own heart was not without its heaviness. A dark foreboding began to creep into it from some undefined cause. Were his thoughts in communion with mine?

"How long," I asked, "before we can reach your house on the Del Norté?"

I scarce knew why I was prompted to put this question. Some fear that we were still in peril from the pursuing foe?

"The day after to-morrow," he replied,

"by the evening. Heaven grant we may find *them* safe!"

I started as the words issued from his lips. They had brought pain in an instant. This was the true cause of my undefined forebodings.

"You have fears?" I inquired hastily.

"I have."

"Of what? of whom?"

"The Navajoes."

"The Navajoes!"

"Yes. My mind has not been easy, since I saw them go eastward from the Piñon. I cannot understand why they did so—unless they meditated an attack on some settlements that lie on the old Llanos' trail. If not that, my fears are that they have made a descent on the valley of El Paso—perhaps on the town itself. One thing may have prevented them from attacking the town—the separation of Dacoma's party—which would leave them too weak for that; but

still the more danger to the small settlements, both north and south of it."

The uneasiness I had hitherto felt, arose from an expression which Seguin had dropped at the Piñon spring. My mind had dwelt upon it, from time to time, during our desert journeyings; but as he did not speak of it afterwards, I thought that he had not attached so much importance to it. I had reasoned wrongly.

"It is just probable," continued the chief, "that the Paseños may defend themselves. They have done so heretofore, with more spirit than any of the other settlements; and hence their long exemption from being plundered. Partly that, and partly because our band has kept their neighbourhood for a length of time—what the savages well know. It is to be hoped that the fear of meeting with us will prevent them from coming into the Jornada, north of the town. If so, *ours* have escaped."

"God grant," I faltered, "it may be thus!"

"Let us sleep!" added Seguin. "Perhaps our apprehensions are idle, and they can benefit nothing. To-morrow we will march forward without halt—if our animals can bear it. Go to rest, my friend—you have not much time."

So saying, he laid his head in the saddle, and composed himself to sleep. In a short while, as if by an act of volition, he appeared to be in a profund slumber!

With me it was different. Sleep was banished from my eyes; and I tossed about with a throbbing pulse, and a brain filled with fearful fancies. The very reaction from the bright dreams in which I had just been indulging, rendered my apprehensions painfully active. I began to imagine scenes that might be enacting at that very moment. My betrothed struggling in the arms of some licentious savage—for these southern Indians, I knew,

possessed none of that cold continence and chivalrous delicacy, that characterize the red men of the "forest."

I fancied her carried into a rude captivity —becoming the "squaw" of some brutal brave—or, still worse, the contested prize of many, and then—O God! O God!

With the agony of the thought, I rose to my feet; and rushed out upon the prairie.

Half frantic, I wandered, not heeding whither I went. I must have walked for hours, but I took no note of the time.

I strayed back upon the edge of the Barranca. The moon was shining brightly, but the grim chasm, yawning away into the earth at my feet, lay buried in silence and darkness. My eye could not pierce its fathomless gloom.

I saw the camp and the caballada far above me on the bank; but my strength was exhausted; and giving way to my

weariness, I sank down upon the very brink of the abyss. The keen torture, that had hitherto sustained me, was followed by a feeling of utter lassitude. Sleep conquered agony, and I slept.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOE.

I MUST have slept an hour or more. Had my dreams been realities, they would have filled the measure of an age.

At length the raw air of the morning chilled, and awaked me. The moon had gone down, for I remembered that she was close to the horizon when I last saw her. Still it was far from being dark, for I could see to a considerable distance through the fog.

"Perhaps the day is breaking," thought I, and I turned my face to the east. It was,

as I had guessed. The eastern sky was streaked with light—it was morning.

I knew it was the intention of Seguin to start early; and I was about summoning resolution to raise myself, when voices broke on my ear. There were short exclamatory phrases, and hoof-strokes upon the prairie turf!

"They are up, and preparing to start!" and with this thought I leaped to my feet, and commenced hurrying towards the camp.

I had not walked ten paces, when I became conscious that the voices I heard were *behind me!*

I stopped and listened. Yes; beyond a doubt I was going *from* them.

"I have mistaken the way to the camp!" and I stepped forward to the edge of the Barranca, for the purpose of assuring myself. What was my astonishment to find that I *had* been going in the right direction; and the sounds were coming from the opposite quarter!

My first thought was, that the band had passed me, and were moving on the route.

"But no—Seguin would not—oh! he has sent out a party to search for me—it is they."

I called out "Hilloa!" to let them know where I was. There was no answer; and I shouted again, louder than before. All at once, the sounds ceased. I knew the horsemen were listening, and I called once more at the top of my voice. There was a moment's silence—then I could hear a muttering of many voices, and the trampling of horses as they galloped towards me.

I wondered that none of them had yet answered my signal; but my wonder was changed into consternation, when I perceived that the approaching party were *on the other side of the Barranca!*

Before I could recover from my surprise, they were opposite me, and reining up on the bank of the chasm. They were

still three hundred yards distant—the width of the gulf—but I could see them plainly through the thin and filmy fog. There appeared in all about a hundred horsemen; and their long spears, their plumed heads, and half-naked bodies, told me at a glance *they were Indians!*

I stayed to inquire no farther; but, ran with all my speed toward the camp. I could see the horsemen on the opposite cliff keeping pace with me at a slow gallop!

On reaching the spring, I found the hunters in surprise, and vaulting into their saddles. Seguin and a few others had gone out on the extreme edge, and were looking over. They had not thought of an immediate retreat—as the enemy, having the advantage of the light, had already discovered the strength of our party.

Though only a distance of three hundred yards separated the hostile bands, twenty miles would have to be passed before they

could meet in battle! On this accout, Seguin and the hunters felt secure for the time; and it was hastily resolved to remain where we were, until we had examined who and what were our opponents.

They had halted on the opposite bank; and sat in their saddles, gazing across. They seemed puzzled at our appearance. It was still too dark for them to distinguish our complexions. Soon, however, it grew clearer; our peculiar dress and equipments were recognised; and a wild yell—the Navajo war-cry—came pealing over the abyss!

"It's Dacoma's party!" cried a voice; "they have taken the wrong side o' the gully."

"No," exclaimed another, "thar's too few o' them for Dacoma's men. Thar aint over a hundred."

"Maybe the flood tuk the rest," suggested the first speaker.

"Wagh! how could they a' missed our trail that's as plain as a wagon-track. 'Taint them no how."

"Who then? It's Navagh. I kud tell thar yelp if I war sleepin'."

"Them's head-chief's niggurs," said Rube at this moment riding forward. "Lookee! yander's the ole skunk himself, on the spotted hoss!"

"You think it is they Rube?" inquired Seguin.

"Sure as shootin', Cap."

"But where are the rest of his band? These are not all."

"They aint far off, I'll be boun'. Hish-sh! I hear them a comin'."

"Yonder's a crowd! Look, boys! look!"

Through the fog, now floating away, a dark body of mounted men was seen coming up the opposite side. They advanced with shouts and ejaculations, as though they were driving cattle. It was so. As the fog rose up, we

could see a drove of horses, horned cattle, and sheep, covering the plain to a great distance. Behind these rode mounted Indians—who galloped to and fro—goading the animals with their spears, and pushing them forward.

"Lord, what a plunder!" exclaimed one of the hunters.

"Aye, them's the fellows have made something by thar expedition. *We* are comin' back empty as we went. Wagh!"

I had been engaged in saddling my horse, and at this moment came forward. It was not upon the Indians that my eye rested, nor upon the plundered cattle. Another object attracted my gaze, and sent the blood curdling to my heart.

Away in the rear of the advancing drove I saw a small party, distinct from the rest. Their light dresses, fluttering in the wind, told me that they were not Indians. They were women. They were captives!

There appeared to be about twenty in all; but my feelings were such that I took little heed of their number. I saw that they were mounted, and that each was guarded by an Indian, who rode by her side.

With a palpitating heart I passed my eye over the group from one to the other. But the distance was too great to distinguish the features of any of them.

I turned toward the chief. He was standing with the glass to his eye. I saw him start—his cheek suddenly blanched—his lips quivered convulsively, and the instrument fell from his fingers to the ground! With a wild look he staggered back, crying out—

"Mon dieu! Mon dieu! O God, thou hast stricken me now!"

I snatched up the telescope to assure myself. But it needed not that. As I was raising it, an object running along the opposite side caught my eye. It was the dog Alp! I

levelled the glass; and the next moment was gazing through it on the face of my betrothed!

So close did she seem that I could hardly restrain myself from calling to her. I could distinguish her pale, beautiful features. Her cheek was wan with weeping, and her rich golden hair hung dishevelled from her shoulders, reaching to the withers of her horse. She was covered with a *serapé*, and a young Indian rode beside her, mounted upon a showy horse, and dressed in the habiliments of a Mexican huzzar!

I looked at none of the others, though a glance showed me her mother—in the string of captives that came after.

The drove of horses and cattle soon passed up, and the females with their guards arrived opposite us. The captives were left back on the prairie, while the warriors rode forward, to where their comrades had halted by the brow of the barranca.

It was now bright day—the fog had cleared away—and across the impassable gulf the hostile bands stood gazing at each other!

CHAPTER III.

NEW MISERY.

It was a most singular rencontre. Here were two parties of men—heart foes to one another—each returning from the country of the other, loaded with plunder, and carrying a train of captives! They had met midway, and stood within musket range, gazing at each other with feelings of the most bitter hostility; and yet a conflict was as impossible as though twenty miles of the earth's surface lay between them!

On one side were the Navajoes, with con-

sternation in their looks—for the warriors had recognised their children. On the other stood the Scalp-hunters—not a few of whom, in the captive train of their enemies, could distinguish the features of a wife, a sister, or a daughter!

Each gazed upon the other with hostile hearts and glances of revenge. Had they met thus on the open prairie, they would have fought one another to the death. It seemed as though the hand of God had interposed to prevent the ruthless shedding of blood, which, but for the gulf that lay between these foemen, would certainly have ensued.

I cannot describe how I felt at the moment. I remember that, all at once, I was inspired with a new vigour both of mind and body. Hitherto I had been little more than a passive spectator of the events of our expedition. I had been acting without any stimulating heart-motive. Now I *had* one that roused me to a desperate energy.

A thought occurred to me, and I ran up to Seguin to communicate it. He was beginning to recover from the terrible blow. The men had learnt the cause of his strange behaviour, and stood around him—some of them endeavouring to console him. Few of them knew aught of the family affairs of their chief; but they had heard of his earlier misfortunes—the loss of his mine—the ruin of his property—the captivity of his child. Now, when it became known that among the prisoners of the enemy were his wife and daughter, even the rude hearts of the hunters were touched with pity at his more than common sufferings. Compassionate exclamations were heard from them, mingled with expressions of their determination to restore the captives, or die in the attempt.

It was with the intention of exciting such a feeling, that I had come forward. It was my design—out of my small stock of world's wealth—to set a premium on devotedness

and valour; but I saw that nobler motives had anticipated me, and I remained silent.

Seguin seemed pleased at the loyalty of his comrades; and began to exhibit his wonted energy. Hope again had possession of him. The men clustered round him to offer their advice, and listen to his directions.

"We kin fight them, Captain, even-handed," said the trapper Garey. "Thar aint over two hundred."

"Jest a hundred and ninety-six," interposed a hunter, "without the weemen. I've counted them—that's thar number."

"Wal," continued Garey, "thar's some difference atween us in point o' pluck I reckin; and what's wantin' in number we'll make up wi' our rifles. I never valleys two to one wi' Injuns, an' a wheen throw'd in, if ye like."

"Look at the ground, Bill! It's all plain. Whar would we be after a volley?

They'd have the advantage wi' their bows and lances. Wagh! they could spear us to pieces thar!"

"I didn't say we would take them on the perairy. We kin foller them till they're in the mountains, an' git them among the rocks. That's what I advise."

"Aye. They can't run away from us with that drove. That's sartin."

"They have no notion of running away. They will most likely attack *us*."

"That's jest what we want," said Garey. "We kin go yonder, and fight them till they've had a bellyful."

The trapper, as he spoke, pointed to the foot of the Mimbres, that lay about ten miles off to the eastward.

"May be they'll wait till more comes up. There's more of head chief's party than these; there were nearly four hundred when they passed the Piñon."

"Rube where can the rest of them be?'

demanded Seguin; "I can see down to the mine, and they are not upon the plain!"

"Aint a gwine to be, Cap. Some luck in that, I reckin. The ole fool has sent a party by tother trail. On the wrong scent—*them* is."

"Why do you think they have gone by the other trail?"

"Why Cap, it stans for raizon. If they wur a comin ahint, some o' them niggurs on tother side wud a gone back afore this to hurry 'em up, do 'ee see? Thur haint gone ne'er a one, as I seed."

"You are right, Rube," replied Seguin, encouraged by the probability of what the other had asserted. "What do you advise us?" continued he, appealing to the old trapper,—whose counsel he was in the habit of seeking in all cases of similar difficulty.

"Wal Cap, it's a twistified piece o' business as it stans; an I haint figured it out to my satersfaction jest yet. If 'ee 'll gi' me a

kupple o' minutes, I'll answer ye to the best o' my possibillities."

"Very well; we will wait for you. Men! look to your arms, and see that they are all in readiness."

During this consultation—which had occupied but a few seconds of time,—we could see that the enemy was similarly employed on the other side. They had drawn around their chief; and, from their gesticulations, it was plain they were deliberating how they should act.

Our appearance—with the children of their principal men as captives—had filled them with consternation at what they saw, and apprehensions of a fearful kind for what they saw not. Returning from a successful foray—laden with spoil, and big with the prospect of feasting and triumph—they suddenly perceived themselves outgeneralled at their own game. They knew

we had been to their town. They conjectured that we had plundered and burnt their houses, and massacred their women and children. They fancied no less; for this was the very work in which they had themselves been engaged; and their judgment was drawn from their own conduct.

They saw moreover that we were a large party,—able to defend what we had taken—at least against them—for they knew well that, with their fire-arms the scalp-hunters were their overmatch—when there was anything like an equality of numbers.

With these ideas then, it required deliberation on their part, as well as with us; and we knew that it could be some time before they would act. They too were in a dilemma.

The hunters obeyed the injunctions of Seguin, and remained silent, waiting upon Rube to deliver his advice.

The old trapper stood apart, half resting

upon his rifle, which he clutched with both hands near the muzzle. He had taken out the "stopper," and was looking into the barrel, as if he were consulting some oracular spirit that he kept bottled up within it. It was one of Rube's peculiar "ways," and those, who knew this, were seen to smile as they watched him.

After a few minutes spent in this silent entreaty, the oracle seemed to have sent forth its response; and Rube, returning the stopper to its place, came walking forward to the chief.

"Billee's right, Cap. If them Injuns must be fit—it's got to be did whur thur's rocks or timmer. They'd whip us to shucks on the parairer. That's settled. Wal; thur's two things. They'll eyther come at us—if so be, yander's our ground,"—here the speaker pointed to a spur of the Mimbres—"or we'll be obleeged to foller them. If so be, we kin do it easy as fallin off a log. They ain't over leg free."

"But how should we do for provisions in that case? We could never cross the desert without them."

"Why, Cap, thur's no difeeculty bout that. Wi' the parairers as dry as they are, I kud stampede that hul cavayard as easy as a gang o' bufflers; and we'd come in for a share o' them, I reckin. Thur's a wuss thing than that this child smells."

"What?"

"I'm afeerd we mout fall in wi' Dacoma's niggurs on the back track; that's what I'm afeerd on."

"True—it is most probable."

"It are—unless they got overtuk in the kenyon; an I don't think it. They understan that crik too well."

The probability of Dacoma's band soon joining those of the head chief was apparent to all; and cast a shadow of despondency over every face. They were no doubt still in pursuit of us; and would soon arrive on the ground.

"Now, Cap," continued the trapper, "I've gin ye my notion o' things, if so be we're boun to fight; but I has my behopes we kin git back the weemen 'ithout wastin our gunfodder."

"How? How?" eagerly inquired the chief and others.

"Why jest this away," replied the trapper, almost irritating me with the prolixity of his style. "Ee see them Injuns on tother side o' the gully?"

"Yes—yes," hastily replied Seguin.

"Wal; 'ee see these hyur?" and the speaker pointed to our captives.

"Yes—yes."

"Wal; 'ee see them over yander, though thur hides be a coppery colour, has feelins for thur childer like white Christyuns. They eat 'em betimes—that's true; but thur's a releegus raizon for that, not many hyur understans, I reckin."

"And what would you have us do?"

"Why jest heist a bit o' a white rag an offer to swop pris'ners. They'll understan it, and come to tarms, I'll be boun'. That putty leetle gal with the long har's head-chief's darter; an' the rest belongs to main men o' the tribe—I picked 'em for that. Besides thur's Dacoma an' the young queen. They'll bite thur nails off about *them*. 'Ee kin give up the chief, and trade them out o' the queen, best way ye kin."

"I will follow your advice," cried Seguin, his eye brightening with the anticipation of a happy result.

"Thur's no time to be wasted then, Cap; if Dacoma's men makes thur appearance, all I've been a sayin' wont be worth the skin o' a sand-rat."

"Not a moment shall be lost," and Seguin gave orders to make ready the flag of peace.

"It 'ud be better, Cap, fust to gi' them a

good sight o' what we've got. They haint seed Dacoma yet, nor the queen. Thur in the bushes."

"Right," answered Seguin. "Comrades! bring forward the captives to the edge of the barranca! Bring the Navajo chief! Bring the—my daughter!"

The men hurried to obey the command; and in a few minutes, the captive children with Dacoma, and the mystery-queen, were led forward to the very brink of the chasm. The serapés, that had shrouded them, were removed; and they stood exposed in their usual costumes before the eyes of the Indians. Dacoma still wore his helmet; and the queen was conspicuous in the rich plume-embroidered tunic. They were at once recognised!

A cry of singular import burst from the Navajoes, as they beheld these new proofs of their discomfiture. The warriors unslung their lances, and thrust them into the earth

with impotent indignation. Some of them drew scalps from their belts—stuck them on the points of their spears, and shook them at us over the brow of the abyss. They believed that Dacoma's band had been destroyed, as well as their women and children; and they threatened us with shouts and gestures.

In the midst of all this, we noticed a movement among the more staid warriors. A consultation was going on.

It ended. A party were seen to gallop toward the captive women, who had been left far back upon the plain.

"Great God!" cried I, struck with a horrid idea, "they are going to butcher them! Quick with the flag!"

But before the banner could be attached to its staff, the Mexican women were dismounted—their rebosos pulled off—and they were led forward to the precipice.

It was only meant for a counter-vaunt—

the retaliation of a pang—for it was evident the savages knew, that among their captives were the wife and daughter of our chief. These were placed conspicuously in front, upon the very brow of the barranca!

CHAPTER IV.

THE FLAG OF TRUCE.

THEY might have spared themselves the pains. That agony was already felt; but, indeed, a scene followed that caused us to suffer afresh.

Up to this moment we had not been recognised by those near and dear to us. The distance had been too great for the naked eye; and our browned faces, and travel-stained habiliments were of themselves a disguise!

But the instincts of love are quick and

keen, and the eyes of my betrothed were upon me. I saw her start forward. I heard the agonized scream. A pair of snow-white arms were extended, and she sank, fainting, upon the cliff!

At the same instant, Madame Seguin had recognised the chief, and called to him by name. Seguin shouted to her in reply, and cautioned her in tones of entreaty to remain patient and silent.

Several of the other females—all young and handsome—had recognised their lovers and brothers, and a scene followed that was painful to witness.

But my eyes were fixed upon *her*. I saw that she recovered from her swoon. I saw the savage, in huzzar trappings, dismount; and, lifting her in his arms, carry her back upon the prairie.

I followed them with impotent gaze. I saw that he was paying her kind attentions; and I almost thanked him, though I knew it was but the selfish gallantry of the lover.

In a short while she rose to her feet again, and rushed back toward the barranca. I heard my name uttered across the ravine. Hers was echoed back; but at the moment both mother and daughter were surrounded by their guards, and carried back upon the prairie.

Meanwhile the white flag had been got ready, and Seguin, holding it aloft, stood out in front. We remained silent, watching with eager glances, for the answer.

There was a movement among the clustered Indians. We heard their voices in earnest talk; and saw that something was going on in their midst.

Presently a tall fine-looking man came out from the crowd, holding an object in his left hand of a white colour. It was a bleached fawn-skin. In his right hand he carried a lance.

We saw him place the fawn-skin on the blade of his lance, and stand forward holding it aloft. Our signal of peace was answered.

"Silence, men!" cried Seguin, speaking to the hunters; and then raising his voice he called aloud in the Indian language.

"Navajoes! you know whom we are. We have passed through your country, and visited your head town. Our object was to search for our dear relatives that we knew were captives in your land. Some we have recovered,—but there are many others we could not find. That these might be restored to us in time, we have taken hostages, as you see. We might have brought away many more; but these we considered were enough. We have not burned your town,—we have not harmed your wives, your daughters, nor your children. With the exception of these, our prisoners, you will find all as you left them."

A murmur ran through the ranks of the Indians. It was a murmur of satisfaction. They had been under the full belief that their town was destroyed and their wo-

men massacred; and the words of Seguin, therefore, produced a singular effect. We could hear joyful exclamations and phrases interchanged among the warriors. Silence was again restored, and Seguin continued:—

"We see that you have been in *our* country. You have made captives, as well as we. You are red men. Red men can feel for their kindred as well as white men. We know this; and for that reason have I raised the banner of peace, that each may restore to the other his own. It will please the Great Spirit, and will give satisfaction to both of us; for that which you hold is of most value to us, and that which we have is dear only to you. Navajoes! I have spoken. I await your answer."

When Seguin had ended, the warriors gathered around the head chief; and we could see that an earnest debate was going on amongst them. It was plain there were

dissenting voices; but the debate was soon over; and the head chief, stepping forward, gave some instructions to the man who held the flag. The latter in a loud voice replied to Seguin's speech as follows:

"White chief! you have spoken well, and your words have been weighed by our warriors. You ask nothing more than what is just and fair. It would please the Great Spirit and satisfy us to exchange our captives; but how can we tell that your words are true? You say that you have not burned our town, nor harmed our women and children. How can we know that this is true? Our town is far off—so are our women, if they be still alive. We cannot ask *them*. We have only your word. It is not enough."

Seguin had already anticipated this difficulty, and had ordered one of our captives an intelligent lad—to be brought forward.

The boy at this moment appeared by his side.

"Question *him*!" shouted he, pointing to the captive lad.

"And why may we not question our brother—the chief Dacoma? The lad is young. He may not understand us. The chief could assure us better."

"Dacoma was not with us at the town. He knows not what was done there."

"Let Dacoma answer that"

"Brother!" replied Seguin, "you are wrongly suspicious, but you shall have his answer," and he addressed some words to the Navajo chief, who sat near him upon the ground.

The question was then put directly to Dacoma by the speaker on the other side. The proud Indian—who seemed exasperated with the humiliating situation in which he was placed—with an angry wave of his hand, and a short ejaculation, answered in the negative.

"Now, brother," proceeded Seguin, "you see I have spoken true. Ask the lad what you first proposed."

The boy was then interrogated as to whether we had burnt the town, or harmed the women and children. To these two questions, he also returned a negative answer.

"Well, brother," said Seguin, "are you satisfied?"

For a long time there was no reply. The warriors were again gathered in council, and gesticulating with earnestness and energy. We could see that there was a party opposed to pacific measures, who were evidently counselling the others to try the fortune of a battle. These were the younger braves; and I observed that he in the huzzar costume—who, as Rube informed us, was the son of the head chief—appeared to be the leader of this party.

Had not the head chief been so deeply interested in the result, the counsels of

these might have carried; for the warriors well knew the scorn that would await them among neighbouring tribes should they return without captives. Besides, there were numbers who felt another sort of interest in detaining them. They had looked upon the daughters of the Del Norté, and "saw that they were fair."

But the counsels of the older men at length prevailed, and the spokesman replied:—

"The Navajo warriors have considered what they have heard. They believe that the white chief has spoken the truth; and they agree to exchange their prisoners. That this may be done in a proper and becoming manner, they propose—that twenty warriors be chosen on each side—that these warriors shall lay down their arms on the prairie in presence of all—that they shall then conduct their captives to the crossing of the barranca by the mine, and there settle the terms of their exchange—

that all the others on both sides shall remain where they now are, until the unarmed warriors have got back with the exchanged prisoners—that the white banners shall then be struck, and both sides be freed from the treaty. These are the words of the Navajo warriors."

It was some time before Seguin could reply to this proposal. It seemed fair enough, but yet there was a *manner* about it, that led us to suspect some design; and we paused a moment to consider it. The concluding terms intimated an intention on the part of the enemy of making an attempt to retake their captives; but we cared little for this, provided we could once get them on our side of the barranca.

It was very proper that the prisoners should be conducted to the place of exchange by *unarmed* men, and twenty was a proper number; but Seguin knew well how the Navajoes would interpret the word "un-

armed," and several of the hunters were cautioned in an under tone to "stray" into the bushes, and conceal their knives and pistols under the flaps of their hunting shirts! We thought that we observed a similar manœuvre going on upon the opposite bank, with the tomahawks of our adversaries!

We could make but little objection to the terms proposed; and as Seguin knew that time saved was an important object, he hastened to accept them.

As soon as this was announced to the Navajoes, twenty men—already chosen no doubt—stepped out into the open prairie; and striking their lances into the ground, rested against them their bows, quivers, and shields. We saw no tomahawks; and we knew that every Navajo carries this weapon. They had all the means of concealing them about their persons—for most of them were dressed in the garb of civilised life, in the plundered habiliments of the Ranche and the Hacienda. We cared little, as we too were suffi-

ciently armed. We saw that the party selected were men of powerful strength. In fact they were the picked warriors of the tribe.

Ours were similarly chosen. Among them were El Sol and Garey, Rube, and the bull-fighter Sanchez. Seguin and I were of the number. Most of the trappers, with a few Delaware Indians, completed the complement. The twenty were soon selected; and stepping out on the open ground, as the Navajoes had done, we piled our rifles in the presence of the enemy.

Our captives were then mounted, and made ready for starting. The Queen and the Mexican girls were brought forward among the rest.

This last was a piece of strategy on the part of Seguin. He knew that we had captives enough to exchange one for one, without these; but he saw, as so did we all, that to leave the Queen behind would interrupt the negotiation, and perhaps put an end to it altogether. He had resolved therefore, on

taking her along; trusting that on the ground he could better negotiate for her. Failing this there would be but one appeal—to arms—and he knew that our party was well prepared for that alternative.

Both sides were at length ready; and at a signal commenced riding down the barranca, in the direction of the mine. The rest of the two bands remained eyeing each other across the gulf, with glances of mistrust and hatred. Neither party could move without the other seeing it; for the plains in which they were—though on opposite sides of the barranca—were but segments of the same horizontal plateau. A horseman, proceeding from either party, could have been seen by the others, to a distance of many miles.

The flags of truce were still waving,—their spears struck in the ground; but each of the hostile bands held their horses saddled and bridled, ready to mount at the first movement of the other.

CHAPTER V.

A VEXED TREATY.

WITHIN the barranca was the mine. The shafts—rude diggings—pierced the cliffs on both sides, like so many caves. The bottom between was bisected by a rivulet that muttered among loose rocks.

On the banks of this rivulet stood the old smelting houses and ruined ranches of the miners. Most of them were roofless, and crumbling to decay. The ground about them was shaggy and choked up. There were briars, mezcal plants, and cacti—all luxuriant, hirsute, and thorny.

Approaching this point—the road on each side of the barranca suddenly dips, both trails converging downward, and meeting among the ruins.

When in view of these, both parties halted, and signalled each other across the ravine. After a short parley, it was proposed by the Navajoes that the captives and horses should remain on the top of the hill—each train to be guarded by two men. The rest—eighteen on each side—would descend to the bottom of the barranca—meet among the houses—and, having smoked the calumet, arrange the terms of the exchange.

Neither Seguin nor I liked this proposal. We saw that in the event of a rupture in the negotiation—a thing we more than half anticipated—even should our party overpower the other, we could gain nothing. Before we could reach the Navajo captives—up the steep hill—the two

guards would hurry them off; or—we dreaded to think of it—butcher them on the ground! It was a fearful thought, but there was nothing improbable in it.

We knew, moreover, that smoking the peace-pipe would be another waste of time; and we were on thorns about the approach of Dacoma's party.

But the proposal had come from the enemy, and they were obstinate. We could urge no objections to it without betraying *our* designs; and we were compelled—though loth—to accept it.

We dismounted—leaving our horses in charge of the guard—and, descending into the ravine, stood face to face with the warriors of Navajo!

They were eighteen picked men—tall, broad-shouldered, and muscular. The expression of their faces was savage, subtle, and grim. There was not a smile to be seen; and the lip, that at that moment had

betrayed one, would have lied. There was hate in their hearts, and vengeance in their looks.

For a moment both parties stood scanning each other in silence. These were no common foes. It was no common hostility that for years had nerved them against each other; and it was no common cause that had, now for the first time, brought them face to face without arms in their hands. A mutual want had forced them to their present attitude of peace—though it was more like a truce between a lion and tiger which have met in an avenue of the jungly forest, and stand eyeing one another.

Though by agreement without arms, both were sufficiently armed, and they *knew* that of each other.

The handles of tomahawks, the hafts of knives, and the shining butts of pistols peeped carelessly out from the dresses both of hunters and Indians. There was

little effort made to conceal these dangerous toys, and they were on all sides visible.

At length our mutual reconnoissance came to a period; and we proceeded to business.

There happened to be no breadth of ground—clear of weeds and thorny rubbish—where we could seat ourselves for the "smoke." Seguin pointed to one of the houses—an *adobé* structure, in a tolerable state of preservation—and several entered to examine it. The building had been used as a smelting-house, and broken trucks and other implements were lying over the floor. There was but one apartment—not a large one either—and near its centre stood a *brazero* covered with cold slag and ashes.

Two men were appointed to kindle a fire upon the brazero; and the rest, entering took their seats upon the trucks and masses of quartz-rock ore that lay around the room.

As I was about seating myself, an object leaped against me from behind, uttering a low whine that ended in a bark. I turned, and beheld the dog Alp. The animal frenzied with delight rushed upon me repeatedly; and it was some time before I could quiet him, and take my place.

At length we were all seated upon opposite sides of the fire—each party forming the arc of a circle, concave to the other.

There was a heavy door still hanging upon its hinge; and, as there were no windows in the house, this was suffered to remain open. It opened to the inside.

The fire was soon kindled and the clay-stone calumet filled with "kini kinik."—It was then lighted and passed from mouth to mouth in profound silence.

We noticed that each of the Indians—contrary to their usual custom of taking only a whiff or two — smoked long and slowly. We knew it was a *ruse* to protract

the ceremony, and gain time; while we—I answer for Seguin and myself—were chafing at the delay.

When the pipe came round to the hunters, it passed in quicker time.

The unsocial smoke was at length ended; and the negotiation began.

At the very commencement of the "talk" I saw that we were going to have a difficulty. The Navajoes — particularly the younger warriors—assumed a bullying and exactive attitude that the hunters were not likely to brook; nor would they have submitted to it for a moment, but for the peculiar position in which their chief was placed. For his sake they held in, as well as they could; but the tinder was apparent, and would not bear many sparks before it blazed up.

The first question was in relation to the number of the prisoners. The enemy had nineteen; while we—without including the

queen, or the Mexican girls—numbered twenty-one. This was in our favour, but to our surprise the Indians insisted, that their captives were grown women, that most of ours were children, and that two of the latter should be exchanged for one of the former!

To this absurdity, Seguin replied that we could not agree to that; but as he did not wish to keep any of their prisoners, he would exchange the twenty-one for the nineteen.

"Twenty-one!" exclaimed a brave, "why, you have twenty-seven. We counted them on the bank."

"Six of those you counted are our own people. They are whites and Mexicans."

"Six whites!" retorted the savage, "there are but five. Who is the sixth?"

"Perhaps it is our queen—*she* is light in colour. Perhaps the pale chief has mistaken *her* for a white!"

"Ha—ha—ha!" roared the savages in a taunting laugh. "Our queen a white! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Your queen," said Seguin, in a solemn voice, "your queen, as you call her, is *my daughter*."

"Ha! ha! ha!" again howled they, in scornful chorus, "your daughter! Ha! ha! ha!" and the room rang with their demoniac laughter.

"Yes!" repeated he in a loud but faltering voice, for he now saw the turn that things were taking. "Yes, she is my daughter."

"How can that be?" demanded one of the braves, an orator of the tribe. "You have a daughter among our captives—we know that. She is white as the snow upon the mountain top. Her hair is yellow as the gold upon these armlets. The queen is dark in complexion; among our tribes there are many as light as she; and her hair is

like the wing of the black vulture. How is that? *Our* children are like one another. Are not yours the same? If the queen be your daughter, then is not the gold-haired maiden. You cannot be the father of both. But no!" continued the subtle savage, elevating his voice, "the queen is not your daughter. She is of our race—a child of Moctezuma—a queen of the Navajoes!"

"The queen must be returned to us!" exclaimed several braves, "she is ours—we must have her!"

In vain Seguin reiterated his paternal claim. In vain he detailed the time and circumstances of her capture by the Navajoes themselves. The braves again cried out,

"She is our queen—we must have her!"

Seguin, in an eloquent speech, appealed to the feelings of the old chief, whose daughter was in similar circumstances; but it was evident that the latter lacked the power, if he had the will, to stay the storm

that was rising. The younger warriors answered with shouts of derision—one of them crying out that "the white chief was raving."

They continued for some time to gesticulate—at intervals declaring loudly that on no terms would they agree to an exchange unless the queen were given up. It was evident that some mysterious tie bound them in such extreme loyalty. Even the exchange of Dacoma was less desired by them.

Their demands were urged in so insulting a manner, that we felt satisfied it was their intention, in the end, to bring us to a fight. The rifles, so much dreaded by them, were absent; and they felt certain of obtaining a victory over us.

The hunters were equally willing to be at it, and equally sure of a conquest.

They only waited the signal from their leader.

A signal was given; but, to their surprise and chagrin, it was one of peace!

Seguin, turning to them and looking down

—for he was upon his feet—cautioned them in a low voice to be patient and silent. Then covering his eyes with his hand, he stood for some moments in an attitude of meditation.

The hunters had full confidence in the talents, as well as bravery of their chief. They knew that he was devising some plan of action; and they patiently awaited the result.

On the other side, the Indians showed no signs of impatience. They cared not how much time was consumed; for by this they hoped, that Dacoma's party would be on their trail. They sat still, exchanging their thoughts in grunts, and short phrases, while many of them filled up the intervals with laughter. They felt quite easy, and seemed not in the least to dread the alternative of a fight with us. Indeed, to look at both parties, one should have said that man to man, we would be no match for them. They were all, with one or two exceptions, men of six feet—most of them over

it—in height; while many of the hunters were small-bodied men. But among these there was not one "white feather."

The Navajoes knew that they themselves were well armed for close conflict. They knew, too, that we were armed. Ha! they little dreamt *how* we were armed. They saw that the hunters carried knives and pistols, but they thought that, after the first volley—uncertain and ill-directed—the knives would be no match for their terrible tomahawks. They knew not that from the belts of several of us—El Sol, Seguin, Garey, and myself—hung a fearful weapon, —the most fearful of all others in close combat—the *Colt revolver*. It was then but a new patent; and no Navajo had ever heard its continuous and death-dealing detonations.

"Brothers!" said Seguin, again placing himself in an attitude to speak, "you deny that I am the father of the girl. Two of your captives—whom you know to be my wife and daughter—are her mother and sister.

This you also deny. If you be sincere, then, you cannot object to the proposal I am about to make. Let *them* be brought before us—let *her* be brought. If she fail to recognise and acknowledge her kindred, then shall I yield my claim; and the maiden will be free to return with the warriors of Navajo."

The hunters heard this proposition with surprise. They knew that Seguin's efforts to awaken any recollection of himself in the mind of the girl had been unsuccessful. What likelihood was there that she would remember her mother? But Seguin himself had little hope of this; and a moment's reflection convinced us that his proposal was based upon some ulterior design.

He saw that the exchange of the queen was a *sine qua non* with the Indians; and without this being granted, the negotiations would terminate abruptly—leaving his wife and younger daughter still in the hands of our enemies. He reflected on the harsh lot

which would await them in their captivity; while *she* but returned to receive homage and kindness. *They* must be saved at every sacrifice—*she* must be yielded up to redeem them.

But Seguin had still another design. It was a strategic manœuvre—a desperate and *dernier resort* on his part. It was this. He saw that if we could once get the captives, his wife and daughter, down among the houses, there would be a possibility—in the event of a fight—of carrying them off. The queen too might thus be rescued as well. It was the alternative suggested by despair.

In a hurried whisper he communicated this, to those of his comrades nearest him—in order to ensure their prudence and patience.

As soon as the proposal was made, the Navajoes rose from their seats, and clustered together in a corner of the room, to deliberate. They spoke in low tones. We

could not, of course, understand what was said, but from the expression of their faces, and their gesticulations, we could tell that they seemed disposed to accept it. They knew that the queen had not recognised Seguin as her father. They had watched her closely, as she rode down the opposite side of the barranca—in fact, conversed with her, before we could interfere to prevent it—by signals. No doubt she had informed them of what happened at the cañon with Dacoma's warriors, and the probability of their approach. They had little fear, then, that she would remember her mother. Her long absence—her age when made captive—her after life, and the more than kind treatment she had received at their hands—had long since blotted out every recollection of her childhood and its associations. The subtle savages well knew this; and at length—after a discussion which

lasted for nearly an hour—they resumed their seats, and signified their assent to the proposal.

Two men—one from each party—were now sent for the three captives, and we sat waiting their arrival.

In a short time they were led in.

I find a difficulty in describing the scene that followed. The meeting of Seguin with his wife and daughter—my own short embrace and hurried kiss—the sobs and swooning of my betrothed—the mother's recognition of her long-lost child—the anguish that ensued as her yearning heart made its appeals *in vain*—the half indignant, half pitying looks of the hunters—the triumphant gestures and ejaculations of the Indians—all formed points in a picture that lives with painful vividness in my memory, though I am not sufficiently master of the author's art to paint it.

In a few minutes the captives were led out of the house, guarded by two men, while the rest of us remained to complete the negotiation.

CHAPTER VI.

A CONFLICT WITH CLOSED DOORS.

THE occurrence did not improve the temper of either party—much less that of the hunters. The Indians were triumphant, but not a whit the less inclined to obstinacy and exaction. They now returned to their former offer. For those of our captives that were woman-grown, they would exchange one for one, and for their chief, Dacoma, they offered to give two. For the rest, they insisted on receiving two for one.

By this arrangement, we could ransom only about twelve of the Mexican women; but, finding them determined, Seguin at

length assented to these terms—provided they would allow us the privilege of choosing the twelve to be exchanged.

To our surprise and indignation this was refused!

We no longer doubted what was to be the winding up of the negotiation. The air was filled with the electricity of anger. Hate kindled hate; and vengeance was burning in every eye.

The Indians scowled on us, glancing malignantly out of their oblique orbs. There was triumph too in their looks, for they believed themselves far stronger than we!

On the other side sat the hunters quivering under a *double* indignation. I say double. I can hardly explain what I mean. They had never before been so braved by Indians. They had, all their lives, been accustomed —partly from bravado, and partly from actual experience—to consider the red men their inferiors in subtlety and courage; and

to be thus bearded by them, filled the hunters, as I have said, with a double indignation. It was like the bitter anger which the superior feels towards his resisting inferior —the lord to his rebellious serf—the master to his lashed slave, who has turned and struck him! It was thus the hunters felt.

I glanced along their line. I never saw faces with such expressions, as I saw there and then. Their lips were white, and drawn tightly over their teeth. Their cheeks were set and colourless; and their eyes, protruding forward, seemed glued in their sockets! There was no motion to be detected in the features of any, save the twitching of angry muscles. Their right hands were buried in the bosoms of their half-open shirts—each, I knew, grasping a weapon—and they appeared not to sit, but to crouch forward, like panthers quivering upon the spring!

There was a long interval of silence on both sides.

It was broken by a cry from without—the scream of the war-eagle!

We should not have noticed this—knowing that these birds were common in the Mimbres, and one might have flown over the ravine—but we thought, or fancied, that it had made an impression upon our adversaries. They were men not apt to show any sudden emotion; but it appeared to us that, all at once, their glances grew bolder and more triumphant! Could it have been a signal?

We listened for a moment. The scream was repeated; and although it was exactly after the manner of a bird well known to us—the white-headed eagle—we sat with unsatisfied and fearful apprehensions.

The young chief—he in the huzzar dress—was upon his feet. He had been the most turbulent and exacting of our opponents. He was a man of most villanous and licentious character—so Rube had told us—but, nevertheless, holding great power among

the braves. It was he who had spoken in refusal of Seguin's offer; and he was now about to assign his reasons. We knew them without that.

"Why," said he, looking at Seguin as he spoke, "why is it that the white chief is so desirous of choosing among our captives? Is it that he wishes to get back the yellow-haired maiden?"

He paused a moment, as if for a reply; but Seguin made none.

"If the white chief believes our queen to be his daughter, would he not wish that her sister should be her companion, and return with her to our land?"

Again he paused; but, as before, Seguin remained silent.

The speaker proceeded.

"Why not let the yellow-haired maiden return with us, and become my wife? Who am I, that ask this? A chief of the Navajoes, the descendants of the great Moctezuma—the son of their king!"

The savage looked around him with a vaunting air, as he uttered these words.

"Who is she," he continued, "that I am thus begging for a bride? The daughter of one who is not even respected among his own people! the daughter of a *culatta!*"

I looked at Seguin. I saw his form dilating. I saw the big veins swelling along his throat. I saw that wild expression, I had once before noticed, gathering in his eyes. I knew that the crisis was near.

Again the eagle screamed!

"But no!" proceeded the savage, seeming to draw new boldness from the signal; "I will beg no more. I love the white maiden. She must be mine! and this very night she shall sleep——"

He never finished the sentence. Seguin's bullet had sped, piercing the centre of his forehead. I caught a glimpse of the red round hole, with its circle of blue powder, as the victim fell forward on his face!

All together we sprang to our feet. As one man rose hunters and Indians. As if from one throat pealed the double shout of defiance; and, as if by one hand, knives, pistols, and tomahawks were drawn together. The next moment we closed and battled!

Oh! it was a fearful strife, as the pistols cracked, the long knives glittered, and the tomahawks swept the air—a fearful, fearful strife!

You would suppose that the first shock should have prostrated both ranks. It was not so. The early blows of a struggle like this are wild, and well parried; and human life is hard to take. What were the lives of men like these?

A few fell. Some recoiled from the collision, wounded and bleeding, but still to battle again. Some fought hand to hand; while several pairs had clutched, and were striving to fling each other, in the desperate wrestle of death!

Some rushed for the door, intending to fight outside. A few got out; but the crowd pressed against it—the door closed—dead bodies fell behind it—we fought in darkness!

We had light enough for our purpose. The pistols flashed at quick intervals, displaying the horrid picture. The light gleamed upon fiendlike faces—upon red and waving weapons—upon prostrate forms of men—upon others struggling in every attitude of deadly conflict!

The yells of the Indians, and the not less savage shouts of their white foemen, had continued from the first; but the voices grew hoarser, and the shouts were changed to groans, and oaths, and short, earnest exclamations. At intervals were heard the quick percussions of blows, and the dull sodden sound of falling bodies!

The room became filled with smoke and dust and choking sulphur; and the combatants, were half stifled as they fought!

At the first break of the battle I had drawn my revolver, and fired it in the faces of the closing foemen. I had fired shot after shot—some at random, others directed upon a victim. I had not counted the reports, until the cock "checking" on the steel nipple, told me I had gone the round of the six chambers.

This had occupied but as many seconds of time. Mechanically I stuck the empty weapon behind my belt; and, guided by an impulse, made for the door. Before I could reach it, it was closed; and I saw that to get out was impossible!

I turned to search for an antagonist. I was not long in finding one. By the flash of a pistol, I saw one of the Indians rushing upon me with upraised hatchet. Up to this time something had hindered me from drawing my knife. It was now too late; and, holding out my arms to catch the blow, I ducked my head toward the savage.

I felt the keen blade cutting the flesh as it glanced along my shoulder. I was but slightly wounded. He had missed his aim from my stooping so suddenly; but the impetus brought our bodies together, and the next moment we grappled!

We stumbled over a heap of rock, and, for some moments, struggled together upon the ground—neither able to use his weapon. Again we rose, still locked in the angry embrace,—again we were falling with terrible force. Something caught us in our descent. It shook. It gave way with a crashing sound; and we fell headlong into the broad and brilliant light!

I was dazzled and blinded. I heard behind me a strange rumbling like the noise made by falling timbers! But I heeded not that. I was too busy to speculate upon causes.

The sudden shock had separated us; and, both rose at the same instant—again to

grapple, and again to come together to the earth. We twisted, and wriggled over the ground, among the weeds and thorny cacti. I was every moment growing weaker, while the sinewy savage—used to such combats—seemed to be gaining fresh nerve and breath. Thrice he had thrown me under; but each time I had clutched his right arm, and prevented the descending blow. I had succeeded in drawing my knife as we fell through the wall; but my arm was also held fast, and I was unable to use it.

As we came to the ground for the fourth time, my antagonist fell under me. A cry of agony passed from his lips,—his head "coggled," over among the weeds—and he lay in my arms without struggling!

I felt his grasp gradually relaxing. I looked in his face. His eyes were glassy and torted. Blood was gurgling through his teeth. I saw that he was dead!

To my astonishment I saw this, for I

knew I had not struck him as yet. I was just drawing my arm from under him to do so, when I noticed that he ceased to resist. But the knife now caught my eye. It was red—blade and haft—and so was the hand that clasped it!

As we fell I had held it, accidentally, point upward. My antagonist had *fallen upon the blade!*

I now thought of my betrothed, and, untwining myself from the lithe and nerveless limbs of the savage, I rose to my feet. The ranche was in flames!

The roof had fallen in upon the brazero; and the dry shingles had caught the blaze. Men were crawling out from the burning ruin; but not to run away. No! under its licking flames, amidst the hot smoke, they still battled—fierce, and foaming, and frenzied!

I did not stay to recognise who they were—these tireless combatants. I ran

forward, looking on all sides for the objects of my solicitude. The wave of female dresses caught my eye, far up the cliff, on the road leading to the Navajo captives. O God! it was they. The three were climbing the steep path, each urged onward by a savage.

My first impulse was to rush after; but at that moment fifty horsemen made their appearance upon the hill, and came galloping downward.

I saw the madness of attempting to follow them; and turned to retreat toward the other side—where we had left our captives and horses. As I ran across the bottom, shots rang in my ear, proceeding from our side of the barranca. Looking up, I descried the mounted hunters coming down at a gallop, pursued by a cloud of savage horsemen. It was the band of Dacoma!

Uncertain what to do, I stood for a

moment where I was, and watched the pursuit.

The hunters, on reaching the ranches, did not halt, but galloped on down the valley, firing as they went. A body of Indians kept on after them; while another body pulled up, clustered around the blazing ruin, and commenced searching among the walls.

I was yet screened in the thicket of cacti; but I saw that my hiding-place would soon be pierced by the eyes of the subtle savages; and, dropping upon my hands and knees, I crept toward the cliff. On reaching it, I found myself close to the mouth of a cave—a small shaft of the mine—and into this I at once betook myself.

CHAPTER VII.

A QUEER ENCOUNTER IN A CAVE.

THE place into which I had crawled was of irregular outlines. Rocks jutted along the sides; and between these, small lateral shafts had been dug—where the miners had followed the ramifications of the "quixa." The cave was not a deep one. The vein had not proved profitable; and had been abandoned for some other.

I kept up it, until I was fairly "in the dark;" and then groping against one side, I found a recess, in which I en-

sconced myself. By peeping round the rock, I could see out of the cave, and some distance over the bottom of the barranca—where the bushes grew thin and straggling.

I had hardly seated myself, when my attention was called to a scene that was passing outside. Two men on their hands and knees were crawling through the cactus plants before the mouth of the cave. Beyond them half-a-dozen savages on horseback were beating the thicket; but had not yet seen the men. These I recognised easily. They were Godé and the Doctor. The latter was nearer me; and as he scrambled on over the shingle, something started out of the rocks within reach of his hand. I noticed that it was a small animal of the armadilla kind. I saw him stretch forward—clutch it—and, with a pleased look, deposit it in a bag that was by his side. All this time the Indians were whooping and yelling behind him, and not fifty yards distant!

Doubtless the animal was some new species; but the zealous naturalist never gave it to the world. He had scarcely drawn forth his hand again, when a cry from the savages announced that he and Godé were discovered; and, the next moment, both lay upon the ground pierced with lances, and to all appearance dead!

Their pursuers now dismounted with the intention of scalping them. Poor Reichter! his cap was pulled off—the bleeding trophy followed—and he lay with the red skull toward the cave—a hideous spectacle!

Another Indian had alighted, and stood over the Canadian with his long knife in his hand. Although pitying my poor follower—and altogether in no humour for mirth—knowing what I did, I could not help watching the proceedings with some curiosity.

The savage stood for a moment, admiring the beautiful curls that embellished the

head of his victim. He was no doubt thinking what handsome fringes they would make for his leggings. He appeared to be in ecstasies of delight; and from the flourishes which he made with his knife, I could see that it was his intention to *skin the whole head!*

After cutting several capers around it, he stooped and grasped a fistful of the curls; but before he had touched the scalp with his blade, the hair lifted off, displaying the white and marble-like skull!

With a cry of terror, the savage dropped the wig; and, running backward, fell over the body of the doctor. The cry attracted his comrades, and several of them dismounting, approached the strange object with looks of astonishment. One, more courageous than the rest, picked up the wig, which they all proceeded to examine with curious minuteness.

Then one after another went up to the

shining skull, and passed their fingers over its smooth surface, all the while uttering exclamations of surprise. They tried on the wig, and took it off, and put it on again, turning it in various ways. At length, he who claimed it as his property, pulled off his plumed head-dress; and, adjusting the wig upon his own head—front backward—stalked proudly around—with the long curls dangling over his face!

It was altogether a curious scene, and, under other circumstances, might have amused me. There was something irresistibly comic in the puzzled looks of the actors; but I had been too deeply affected by the tragedy to laugh at the farce. There was too much of horror around me. Seguin perhaps dead. *She* gone for ever—the slave of the brutal savage. My own peril, too, at the moment—for I knew not how soon I might be discovered, and dragged forth. This affected me

least of all. My life was now of little value to me; and so I regarded it.

But there is an *instinct*—so called—of self-preservation, even when the will ceases to act. Hopes soon began to shape themselves in my mind, and along with these the *wish* to live. Thoughts came. I might organise a powerful band. I might yet rescue her. Yes! even though years might intervene, I would accomplish this. She would still be true! *She would never forget!*

Poor Seguin! what a life of hope withered in an hour—he himself sealing the sacrifice with his blood!

But I would not despair—even with his fate for a warning. I would take up the drama where he had ended. The curtain should rise upon new scenes, and I would not abandon the stage until I had accomplished a more joyous finale—or, failing this, had reached the denouément of death or vengeance!

Poor Seguin! No wonder, he had been a scalp-hunter. I could now understand how

holy was his hate for the ruthless red-man. I, too, had imbibed the passion!

With such reflections passing hastily—for the scene I have described, and the sequent thoughts, did not occupy much time—I turned my eyes inward, to examine whether I was sufficiently concealed in my niche. They might take it into their heads to *search the shaft!*

As I endeavoured to penetrate the gloom that extended inward, my gaze became riveted on an object, that caused me to shrink back with a cold shudder. Notwithstanding the scenes I had just passed through, this was the cue for still another agony.

In the thick of the darkness I could distinguish two small spots, round and shining. They did not scintillate, but rather glistened with a steady greenish lustre. I knew that *they were eyes!*

I was in the cave with a panther; or with

a still more terrible companion, the grizzly bear!

My first impulse was to press back into the recess, where I had hidden myself. This I did, until my back leaned against the rocks. I had no thoughts of attempting to escape out. That would have been from the frying-pan to the fire—for the Indians were still in front of the cave. Moreover, any attempt to retreat would only draw on the animal—perhaps at that moment straining to spring!

I cowered closely—groping along my belt for the handle of my knife. I clasped this at length; and, drawing it forth, waited in a crouching attitude.

During all this time, my eyes had remained fixed on the lustrous orbs before me.

I saw that *they* were fixed upon mine; and watched me without as much as winking!

Mine seemed to be possessed of abstract volition. *I could not take them off!* They were held by some terrible fascination; and

I felt, or fancied, that the moment this should be broken, the animal would spring upon me!

I had heard of fierce brutes being conquered by the glance of the human eye; and I endeavoured to look back my *vis-a-vis* with interest.

We sat for some time—neither of us moving an inch. I could see nothing of the animal's body—nothing but the green gleaming circles that seemed set in a ground of ebony.

As they had remained motionless so long, I conjectured that the owner of them was still lying in his lair; and would not make his attack, until something disturbed him—perhaps until the Indians had gone away.

The thought now occurred to me that I might better arm myself. I knew that a knife would be of little avail against a grizzly bear. My pistol was still in my belt, but it was empty. Would the animal permit me to load it? I resolved to make the attempt.

Still leaving my eyes to fulfil their office, I felt for my flask and pistol; and, finding both ready, I commenced loading. I proceeded with silence and caution, for I knew that these animals could see in the dark; and that in this respect my *vis-a-vis* had the advantage of me. *I felt the powder in* with my finger; and, pushing the ball on top of it, rolled the cylinder to the right notch, and cocked.

As the spring "clicked" I saw the eyes start. "It will be on me now!"

Quick as the thought, I placed my finger to the trigger; but before I could level, a voice, with a well known accent, restrained me.

"Hold on thur, d—n yur!" cried the voice; "Why the d—t—n didn't 'ee say yur hide wur white? I thought 'twur some sneaking Injun. Who the h—l are 'ee, any how? 'Taint Bill Garey? No, Billee; 'taint you, ole fellur."

No," said I, recovering from my surprise. "It's not Bill."

"I mout a guessed that. Bill wud a know'd me sooner. He wud a know'd the glint o' this niggur's eyes, as I wud hisn. Ah! poor Billee! Ise afeerd that trapper's rubbed out; an thur aint many more o' his sort in the mountains. No, that thur aint."

"D—t—n!" continued the voice with a fierce emphasis. "This comes o' layin one's rifle ahint them. Ef I'd a had Targuts wi' me, I wudnt a been hidin hyur like a scared possum. But she are gone—that leettle gun are gone—and the mar too,—and hyur I am 'ithout eyther beast or weepun. D—t—n!"

And the last word was uttered with an angry hiss, that echoed through every part of the cave.

"Yur the young fellur—the Capt'ns friend, aint'ee?" inquired the speaker, with a sudden change of tone.

"Yes," I replied.

"I didn't see yur a comin in, or I mout a spoke sooner. I've got a smart lick across the arm, and I wur jest a tyin it up as ye tummled in thur. Who did 'ee think this child wur?"

"I did not think you were any one. I took you for a grizzly bear."

"Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! I thort so, when I heerd the clock o' yur pistol. He—he—he! If ever I sets my peepers on Bill Garey agin, I'll make that niggur larf till his gut aches. Ole Rube tuk for a grizzly! If that aint—Ha—ha—ha! He—he—he! Ho—ho—hoo!"

And the old trapper chuckled at the conceit, as if he had just been witnessing some scene of amusement, and there was not an enemy within a hundred miles of him!

"Did you see anything of Seguin?" I asked, wishing to learn whether there was any probability that my friend still lived.

"Did I? I did; an' a sight that wur. Did 'ee iver see a catamount riz?"

"I believe I have," said I.

"Wal—that wur him. He wur in the shanty, when it felled. So wur I m'self; but I wa'nt thur long arter. I creeped out some'rs about the door; an jest then I seed the Cap, hand to hand wi' an Injun in a stan-up tussle; but it didn't last long. The Cap gin him a sockdolloger some'rs about the ribs; and the niggur went under—*he* did."

"But what of Seguin? Did you see him afterwards?"

"Did I see him arterwards? No. I didn't."

"I fear he is killed."

"That aint likely, young fellur. He knows these diggins better'n any o'us; and he oughter know whur to caché, I reckin. He's did that, I'll be boun'."

"Aye, if he would," said I, thinking that

Seguin might have followed the captives, and spent his life recklessly.

"Don't be skeert about him, young fellur. The Cap aint a gwine to put his fist into a bee's nest, whur thur's no honey—*he* aint."

"But where could he have gone, when you did not see him afterwards?"

"Whur could he a gone? Fifty ways he kud a gone—through the brush. I didn't think o' lookin arter him. He left the Injun whur he had throw'd him, 'ithout raisin the har. So I stooped down to git it; and when I riz agin, he wa'nt thur no how. But *that* Injun wur. Lor'! that Injun are some punkins—*he* are."

"What Indian do you mean?"

"Him as jined us on the Del Nort—the Coco."

"El Sol! what of him? is he killed?"

"Wal he aint, I reckin; nor can't a be—that's this child's opeenyun o' it. He kim from under the ranche, arter it whammled;

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an his fine dress looked as spick, as ef it had been jest tuk out-o' a bandy-box. Thur wur two at him, an Lor ! how he fit them! I tackled on to one o' them ahint, an gin *him* a settler in the hump ribs ; but the way *he* finished the other wur a caution to Crockett. 'Twur the puttiest lick I ever seed in these hyur mountains ; an I've seed a good wheen, I reckin."

"How was it?"

"'Ee know the Injun—that are the Coco —fit wi' a hatchet?"

"Yes."

"Wal then; that ur's a desprit weepun, for them as knows how to use it; an *he* diz—that Injun diz. T'other had a hatchet too, but he didn't keep it long. 'Twur clinked out o' his hands in a minnit; an then the Coco got a down blow at him. Wah ! it *wur* a down blow, an it want nuthin else. It split the niggur's head clur down to the thrapple. 'Twur sep'rated into two

halves as ef 't had been clove wi' a broad-axe! Ef 'ee had a seed the varmint when he kim to the ground, 'ee 'd a thort he wur double-headed. Jest then I. spied the Injuns a comin down both sides o' the bluff; an' havin neyther beast nor weepun'—ceptin a knife—this child tuk a notion 'twa'nt safe to be thur any longer, and cachéd—*he* did."

CHAPTER VIII.

SMOKED OUT.

Our conversation had been carried on in a low tone, for the Indians still remained in front of the cave. Many others had arrived, and were examining the skull of the Canadian, with the same looks of curiosity and wonderment that had been exhibited by their comrades.

Rube and I sat for some time in silence, watching them. The trapper had flitted nearer me, so that he could see out, and talk in whispers.

I was still apprehensive that the savages might search the cave.

"'Taint likely," said my companion. "They mout ef thur had'nt a been so many o' these diggins, do'ee see? Thur's a grist o' em—more'n a hundred—on tother side; an most o' the men who got clur tuk furrer down. It's my notion the Injuns seed that, an wont disturb——*Gee—zus! ef thur aint that d—t—n dog!*"

I well understood the meaning of the fearful emphasis, with which these last words were repeated. My eyes, simultaneously with those of the speaker, had fallen upon the dog Alp. He was running about in front of the cave. I saw at a glance he was searching for *me!*

The next moment he had struck the trail —where I had crawled through the cacti— and came running down in the direction of the cave!

On reaching the body of the Canadian—

which lay directly in his track—he stopped for a moment, and appeared to examine it. Then, uttering a short yelp, he passed on to that of the doctor, where he made a similar demonstration. He ran several times from one to the other; but at length left them; and, with his nose once more to the ground, disappeared out of our view.

His odd actions had attracted the attention of the savages, who, one and all, stood watching him!

My companion and I were beginning to hope that he had lost me; when, to our dismay, he appeared a second time coming down the trail, as before. This time he leaped over the bodies; and, the next moment, sprang into the mouth of the cave!

A yell from without told us that we were lost.

We endeavoured to drive the dog out again, and succeeded—Rube having wounded him with his knife—but the wound

itself, and the behaviour of the animal outside, convinced our enemies that some one was within the shaft.

In a few seconds the entrance was darkened by a crowd of savages, shouting and yelling.

"Now show yur shootin', young fellur," said my companion. It's the new kind o' pistol 'ee hev got. Load every ber'l of it."

"Shall I have time to load them?"

"Plenty o' time. They aint a gwine to come in 'ithout a light. Thur gone for a torch to the shanty. Quick wi yur! Slap in the fodder.!"

Without waiting to reply, I caught hold of my flask, and loaded the remaining five chambers of the revolver. I had scarcely finished, when one of the Indians appeared in front with a flaming brand; and was about stooping into the mouth of the cavern.

"Now's yur time," cried Rube. "Fetch

the d—d niggur out o' his boots!—fetch him!"

I fired, and the savage dropping the torch, fell dead upon the top of it!

An angry yell from without followed the report; and the Indians disappeared from the front. Shortly after, an arm was seen reaching in; and the dead body was drawn back out of the entrance!

"What will they do next, think you?" I inquired of my companion.

"I can't tell adzactly yit; but thur sick o' that game, I reckin. Load that ber'l agin. I guess we'll git a wheen o' 'em afore we gins in. D—t—n! that gun, Targuts. Ef I only had that leetle piece hyur. 'Ee've got six shots, have 'ee? Good. 'Ee mout chock up the cave wi' their karkidges afore they kin reach us. It *are* a great weepun, an' no mistakes. I seed the Cap use it. Lor! how he made it tell on them niggurs i' the shanty. Thur aint many o' *them* about, I

reckin. Load sure, young fellur! Thur's plenty o' time. They knows what you've got thur."

During all this dialogue, none of the Indians made their appearance; but we could hear them on both sides of the shaft, without. We knew they were deliberating on what plan they would take to get at us.

As Rube suggested, they seemed to be aware that the shot had come from a revolver. Doubtless some of the survivors of the late fight had informed them of the fearful havoc, that had been made among them with our pistols; and they dreaded to face them. What other plan would they adopt? Starve us out?

"They mout," said Rube, in answer to my question, "'an kin if they try. Thur aint a big show o' vittlin hyur—'cept in we chaw donicks. But thur's another way, ef they only hev the gumshin to go about it, that 'll git us sooner than starvin—H—ll!"

ejaculated the speaker, with emphasis. "I thort so. Thur a gwine to smoke us. Lookee, yander!"

I looked forth. At a distance I saw several Indians coming in the direction of the cave, carrying large bundles of brush-wood. Their intention was evident.

"But *can* they do this?" I inquired, doubting the possibility of our enemies being able to effect their purpose in that way; "can we not bear the smoke?"

"Bar it! Yur green, young fellur. Do'ee know what sort o' d—d brush thur a toatin yander?"

"No," said I, "what is it?"

"It are the stink-plant then; an' the stinkinest plant 'ee ever smelt, I reckin. The smoke o' it ud choke a skunk out o' a persimmon log. I tell 'ee, young'un, we'll eyther be smoked out, or smothered whur we are; an' this child haint fit Injun, for thirty yeern or better, to go under thata-

way. When it gits to its wust, I'm a gwine to make a rush. That's what *I'm* a gwine ter do, young fellur."

"But how?" I asked hurriedly, "how shall we act then?"

"How? Yur game to the toes, aint 'ee?"

"I am willing to fight to the last."

"Wal then, hyur's how, an the only how. When they've raised the smoke, so that they cant see us a comin, we'll streak it out among 'em. You hev the pistol, and kin go fo'most. Shoot every d——d niggur that clutches at ye, an run like h—ll. I'll foller clost on yur heels. If we kin oncest git through the thick o' em, we mout make the brush, and creep under it to the big caves on tother side. Them caves jines one another; and we mout dodge them thur. I seed the time this coon kud a run a bit; but these hyur jeints aint as soople as they wur oncest. We kin try neverthemless; and mind, young fellur; it's our only chance, do'ee hear?"

I promised to follow the directions, that my never-despairing companion had given me.

"They wont get ole Rube's scalp yit—*they* won't.—He! he! he!"

I turned toward him. The man was actually laughing at this wild and strange-timed jest! It was awful to hear him.

Several armfuls of brush were now thrown into the mouth of the cave. I saw that it was the filthy creosote plant—the *ideo-dondo.*

It was thrown upon the still blazing torch, and soon caught—sending up a thick black smoke. More was piled on, and the fetid vapour—impelled by some influence from without—began to reach our nostrils and lungs, causing an almost instantaneous feeling of sickness and suffocation. I could not have borne it long. I did not stay to try how long—for at that moment I heard Rube crying out:—

"Now's yur time, young fellur! Out, and gi' them h—ll!

With a feeling of desperate resolve, I clutched my pistol, and dashed through the smoking brushwood. I heard a wild and deafening shout. I saw a crowd of men—of fiends. I saw spears, and tomahawks, and red knives, raised, and—

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CHAPTER IX.

A NOVEL MODE OF EQUITATION.

When consciousness returned, I found that I was lying on the ground, and my dog—the innocent cause of my captivity—was licking my face. I could not have been long senseless; for the savages were still gesticulating violently around me. One was waving them back. I recognised him. It was Dacoma!

The chief uttered a short harangue that seemed to quiet the warriors. I could not tell what he said, but I heard him use frequently, the word Quetzalcoatl. I knew

that this was the name of their god; but I did not understand, at the time, what the saving of any life could have to do with him.

I thought that Dacoma was protecting me, from some feeling of pity or gratitude; and I endeavoured to recollect whether I had shown him any special act of kindness during his captivity. I had sadly mistaken the motives of that splendid savage.

My head felt sore. Had they scalped me? With the thought, I raised my hand, passing it over my crown. No. My favourite brown curls were still there; but there was a deep cut along the back of my head—the dent of a tomahawk. I had been struck from behind, as I came out, and before I could fire a single bullet!

Where was Rube? I raised myself a little, and looked around. He was not to be seen anywhere!

Had he escaped, as he intended? No;

it would have been impossible for any man, with only a knife, to have fought his way through so many. Moreover, I did not observe any commotion among the savages, as if an enemy had escaped them. None seemed to have gone off from the spot. What then had—? Ha! I now understood, in its proper sense, Rube's jest about his scalp. It was not a *double entendre*, but a *mot* of triple ambiguity.

The trapper, instead of following me, had remained quietly in his den; where, no doubt, he was at that moment watching me—his scape-goat—and chuckling at his own escape!

The Indians, never dreaming that there were two of us in the cave, and satisfied that it was now empty, made no farther attempts to "smoke" it.

I was not likely to undeceive them. I knew that Rube's death or capture could not have benefited me; but I could not

help reflecting on the strange stratagem by which the old fox had saved himself.

I was not allowed much time for reflection. Two of the savages, seizing me by the arms, dragged me up to the still blazing ruin. O God! was it for this Dacoma had saved me from their tomahawks? for this, the most cruel of deaths!

They proceeded to tie me hand and foot. Several others were around, submitting to the same treatment. I recognised Sanchez the bull-fighter, and the red-haired Irishman. There were three others of the band whose names I had never learnt.

We were in an open space—in front of the burning ranche. We could see all that was going on.

The Indians were clearing it of the fallen and charred timbers, to get at the bodies of their friends. I watched their proceedings with less interest, as I now knew that Seguin was not there.

It was a horrid spectacle when the rubbish was cleared away, laying bare the floor of the ruin. More than a dozen bodies lay upon it—half baked, half roasted! Their dresses were burned off; but by the parts that remained still intact from the fire, we could easily recognise to what party each had belonged. The greater number of them were Navajoes. There were also the bodies of hunters smoking inside their cindery shirts. I thought of Garey ; but, as far as I could judge, he was not among them.

There were no scalps for the Indians to take. The fire had been before them, and had left not a hair upon the heads of their dead foemen!

Seemingly mortified at this, they lifted the bodies of the hunters, and tossed them once more into the flames, that were still blazing up from the piled rafters. They gathered the knives, pistols, and tomahawks that lay among the ashes ; and, carrying what re-

mained of their own people out of the ruin, placed them in front. They then stood around them in a circle; and with loud voices, chaunted a chorus of vengeance!

During all this, we lay where we had been thrown, guarded by a dozen savages. We were filled with fearful apprehensions. We saw the fire still blazing, and we saw that the half-burnt bodies of our late comrades had been thrown upon it. We dreaded a similar fate for our own!

But we soon found that we were reserved for some other purpose. Six mules were brought up, and upon these we were mounted in a novel fashion. We were first set astride on the bare backs, with our faces turned tailwards. Our feet were then drawn under the necks of the animals, where our ankles were closely corded together. We were next compelled to bend down our bodies, until we *lay along the backs* of the mules—our chins resting on their rumps. In this position our arms were

drawn down, until our hands met underneath, where they were tied tightly by the wrists.

The attitude was painful; and to add to this, our mules—not used to be thus "packed,"—kicked and plunged over the ground, to the great mirth of our captors.

This cruel sport was kept up—even after the mules themselves had got tired of it—by the savages pricking the animals with their spears, and placing branches of the cactus under their tails. We were fainting when it ended!

Our captors now divided themselves into two parties, and started up the barranca—taking opposite sides. One went with the Mexican captives, and the girls and children of the tribe. The larger party under Dacoma, now head-chief—for the other had been killed in the conflict—guarded *us*.

We were carried up that side, on which was the spring; and, arriving at the water,

were halted for the night. We were taken off the mules, and securely tied to one another—our guards watching us without intermission till morning. We were then "packed" as before, and carried westward across the Desert.

CHAPTER X.

A FAST DYE.

After a four days' journey—painful even to be remembered—we re-entered the valley of Navajo. The other captives, along with the great caballada had arrived before us; and we saw the plundered cattle scattered over the plain.

As we approached the town, we were met by crowds of women and children, far more than we had seen on our former visit. These were guests, who had come in from other villages of the Navajoes, that lay farther to

the north. They were there to witness the triumphant return of the warriors, and partake of the great feast, that always follows a successful foray.

I noticed many white faces among them, with features of the Iberian race! They had been captives; they were now the wives of warriors. They were dressed like the others and seemed to participate in the general joy! They, like Seguin's daughter, had been *Indianised.*

There were many Mertizoes—half-bloods —the descendants of Indians, and their Mexican captives—the offspring of many a Sabine wedding!

We were carried through the streets, and out to the western side of the village. The crowd followed us with mingled exclamations of triumph, hatred, and curiosity. At the distance of a hundred yards or so from the houses, and close to the river bank, our guards drew up.

I had turned my eyes on all sides as we passed through—as well as my awkward position would permit. I could see nothing of *her*, or any of the female captives. Where could they be? Perhaps in the temple.

This building stood on the opposite side of the town, and the houses prevented me from seeing it. Its top only was visible from the spot where we had been halted.

We were untied and taken down. We were happy at being relieved from the painful attitude in which we had ridden all the way. We congratulated ourselves that we should now be allowed to sit upright. Our self-congratulation was brief. We soon found that the change was "from the frying-pan to the fire." We were only to be "turned." We had hitherto lain upon our bellies; we were now to be laid upon our backs!

In a few moments the change was accom-

plished—our captors handling us as unceremoniously, as though we were inanimate things. Indeed, we were nearly so.

We were spread upon the green turf, on our backs. Around each man four long pins were driven into the ground—in the form of a parallelogram. Our arms and legs were stretched out to their widest; and raw-hide thongs were looped about our wrists and ankles. These were passed over the pins, and drawn so tightly, that our joints cracked with the cruel tension! Thus we lay, faces upturned, like so many hides spread out to be sun-dried!

We were placed in two ranks "endways"—in such a manner, that the heads of the front rank men rested between the feet of their respective "rears." As there were six of us in all, we formed three files, with short intervals between.

Our attitudes and fastenings left us without the power of moving a limb. The only

member over which we had any control was the head; and this—thanks to the flexibility of our necks—we could turn about, so as to see what was going on in front, or on either side of us.

As soon as we were fairly staked down, I had the curiosity to raise my head, and look around me. I found that I was "rear rank, right file," and that my file leader was the *ci-devant* soldier, O'Cork.

The Indian guards after having stripped us of most of our clothing left us; and the girls and squaws now began to crowd around. I noticed, that they were gathering in front of my position, and forming a dense circle around the Irishman. I was struck with their ludicrous gestures, their strange exclamations, and the puzzled expression of their countenances.

"Ta—yah! Ta—yah!" cried they, and the whole crowd burst out into shrill screams of laughter.

What could it mean? Barney was evidently the subject of their mirth; but what was there about him to cause it, more than any of the rest of us?

I raised my head to ascertain. The riddle was solved at once. One of the Indians, in going off, had taken the Irishman's cap with him; and the round red head was exposed to view. It lay midway, between my feet, like a luminous ball; and I saw that *it* was the object of diversion.

By degrees the squaws drew nearer, until they were huddled up in a thick crowd around the body of our comrade. At length one of them stooped, and touched the head, drawing back her fingers with a start and a gesture, as if she had burned them!

This elicited fresh peals of laughter, and very soon all the women of the village were around the Irishman, "scrouging" one an-

other to get a closer view. None of the rest of us were heeded—except to be liberally trampled upon—and half a dozen big, heavy squaws were standing upon my limbs—the better to see over one another's shoulders.

As there was no great stock of petticoats to curtain the view, I could still see the Irishman's head gleaming like a meteor through the forest of ankles!

After a while the squaws grew less delicate in their touch; and catching hold of the short stiff bristles, endeavoured to pluck them out—all the while screaming with laughter! I was neither in the state of mind nor the attitude to enjoy a joke; but there was a language in the back of Barney's head—an expression of patient endurance—that would have drawn smiles from a grave-digger; and Sanchez and the others were laughing aloud!

For a long time our comrade endured the

infliction, and remained silent, but at last it became too painful for his patience, and he began to speak out.

"Arrah! now girls," said he, in a tone of good-humoured entreaty, "will yez be aizy? Did yez niver see rid hair afore?"

The squaws, at hearing the appeal—which of course they understood not—only showed their white teeth in loud laughter.

"In trath, an iv I had yez on the sod, anent the owld Cove o'Cark, I cud show yez as much av it as ud contint ye for yer lives. Arrah! now keep aff me! Be the powers, yer trampin' the toes aff me feet! Ach! don't rug me! holy mother! will yez lit me alone? Divil resave ye, for a set of——"

The tone in which the last words were uttered, showed that O'Cork had at length lost his temper; but this only increased the assiduity of his tormentors, whose mirth now broke beyond bounds. They "plucked" him harder than ever—yelling all the while

—so that, although he continued to scold, I could only hear him at intervals ejaculating "Mother av Moses!" "Tare an ages!" "Holy vistment!" "Livin' Jaysus!" and a variety of similar exclamations.

This scene continued for several minutes; and then, all at once, there was a lull, and a consultation among the women, that told us they were devising some scheme.

Several girls were sent off to the houses. These presently returned, bringing a large *olla*, and another vessel of smaller dimensions. What did they intend to do with these? We soon learned.

The olla was filled with water from the adjacent stream, and carried up; and the smaller vessel was set down beside Barney's head. We saw that it contained the *yuca* soap of the Northern Mexicans. They were going to *wash out the red!*

The Irishman's hand-stays were now loosened, so that he could sit upright; and

a copious coat of the "soft soap" was laid on his head, completely covering the hair. A couple of sinewy squaws then took hold of him by the shoulders, and with bunches of bark fibres applied the water, and scrubbed it in lustily.

The application seemed to be anything but pleasant to Barney, who roared out, ducking his head on all sides to avoid it. But this did not serve him. One of the squaws seized the head between her hands, and held it steady, while the other set at it afresh, and rubbed harder than ever.

The Indians yelled, and danced around; but in the midst of all, I could hear Barney sneezing, and shouting in a smothered voice :—

"Holy Mother—htch-tch! Yez may rub—tch-itch!—till yez fetch-tch the skin aff—atch-ich-ich! an' it wont—tscztsh! come out. I tell yez—itch-ch! it's in the grain—itch-itch! It won't come out—itch-

itch!—be me sowl! it won't—atch-itch-hitch!'

But the poor fellow's expostulations were in vain. The scrubbing continued, with fresh applications of the yuca, for ten minutes, or over; and then the great olla was lifted, and its contents dashed upon his head and shoulders.

What was the astonishment of the women to find that instead of modifying the red colour, it only showed forth, if possible, more vivid than ever!

Another olla of water was lifted, and hoised about the Irishman's ears, but with no better effect.

Harney had not had such a washing for many a day—at least, not since he had been under the hands of the regimental barber.

When the squaws saw that in spite of all their efforts, the dye still stuck fast, they desisted; and our comrade was again stalked away. His bed was not so dry as before;

neither was mine, for the water had saturated the ground about us, and we lay in mud. But this was a small vexation compared with many others we were forced to put up with.

For a long time the Indian women and children clustered around us, each in turn minutely examining the head of our comrade. We, too, came in for a share of their curiosity; but O'Cork was "the elephant."

They had seen hair like ours oftentimes, upon their Mexican captives; but, beyond a doubt, Barney's was the first red poll that had ever been scratched in the valley of Navajo.

Darkness came on at length, and the squaws returned to the village, leaving us in charge of the guards, who all the night, sat watchfully beside.

CHAPTER XI.

ASTONISHING THE NATIVES.

Up to this time we had no knowledge of the fate that was designed for us; but, from all that we had ever heard of these savages, as well as from our own experience of them, we anticipated that it would be a cruel one.

Sanchez, however, who knew something of their language, left us no room to doubt such a result. He had gathered, from the conversation of the women, what was before us. After these had gone away, he unfolded the programme, as he had heard it.

"To-morrow," said he, "they will dance the *Mamanchic*, the great dance of Moctezuma. That is a fête among the girls and women. Next day will be a grand tournament, in which the warriors will exhibit their skill in shooting the bow, in wrestling, and feats of horsemanship. If they would let me join them, I would show them how."

Sanchez, besides being an accomplished torero, had spent his earlier years in the circus; and was, as we all knew, a most splendid horseman.

"On the third day," continued he, "we are to 'run the muck,' if you know what that is."

We had all heard of it.

"And on the fourth——"

"Well? upon the fourth?"

"*They will roast us!*"

We might have been more startled at this abrupt declaration, had the idea been new to us; but it was not. The probability of such

an end, had been in our thoughts ever since our capture. We knew that they did not save us at the mine, for the purpose of giving us an easier death; and we knew too, that these savages never make *men*-prisoners to keep them alive. Rube was an exception; but his story was a peculiar one, and he escaped only by his extreme cunning. "Their God," continued Sanchez; "is the same as that of the Mexican Aztecs; for these people are of that race, it is believed. I dont know much about that, though I've heard men talk of it. He is called by a devil of a hard name—Carrai!"

"Quetzalcoatl?"

"Cabal!" that's the word. Pues, señores; he is a Fire God, and fond of human flesh—prefers it roasted,—so they say. That's the use we'll be put to. They'll roast us, to please him; and at the same time satisfy themselves. '*Dos pajaros al un golpe!*' (two birds with one stone.)"

That this was to be our fate was no longer probable but certain; and we slept upon the knowledge of it the best way we could.

In the morning there was dressing and painting among the Indians. After that began dancing—the dance of the Mamanchic.

This ceremony took place upon the prairie, at some distance out in front of the temple.

As it was about commencing, we were taken from our spread positions, and dragged up near it, in order that we might witness the "glory of the nation."

We were still tied, however; but allowed to sit upright. This was some relief; and we enjoyed the change of posture much more than the spectacle.

I could not describe the dance, even if I had watched it, which I did not. As Sanchez had said, it was carried on only by the women of the tribe. Processions of young girls, gaily and fantastically attired, and

carrying garlands of flowers, circled, and leaped through a variety of figures. There was a raised platform, upon which a warrior and maiden represented Moctezuma and his queen, and around these the girls danced and chaunted. The ceremony ended by the dancers kneeling in front, in a grand semi-circle. I saw that the occupants of the throne were Dacoma and Adele. I fancied that the girl looked sad!

"Poor Seguin!" thought I, "there is none to protect her now. Even the false father —the medicine chief—might have been her friend. He, too, is out of the way, and—"

But I did not occupy much time with thoughts of her. There was a far more painful apprehension than that. My mind, as well as my eyes, had dwelt upon the temple during the ceremony. We could see it—from the spot where we had been thrown down; but it was too distant for me to distinguish the faces of the white females, that

were clustered along its terraces. *She* no doubt was among them, but I was unable to make her out. Perhaps it was better I was not near enough. I thought so at the time.

I saw Indian men among the captives, and I had observed Dacoma—previous to the commencement of the dance—proudly striding before them in all the paraphernalia of his regal robes.

Rube had given me the character of this chief—brave, but brutal and licentious. My heart was oppressed with a painful heaviness, as we were hurried back to our former places.

Most of the next night was spent by the Indians in feasting. Not with us. We were rarely and scantily fed, and we suffered, too, from thirst—our savage guards scarcely deigning to supply us with water, though a river was running at our feet.

Another morning, and the feasting re-

commenced. More sheep and cattle were slaughtered, and the fires steamed anew with the red joints that were suspended over them.

At an early hour the warriors arrayed themselves—though not in war attire—and the tournament commenced.

We were again dragged forward to witness their savage sports, but placed still farther out on the prairie.

I could distinguish, upon the terrace of the temple, the whitish dresses of the captives. The temple was their place of abode.

Sanchez had told me this. He had heard it from the Indians, as they conversed with one another. The girls were to remain there until the fifth day—that after *our* sacrifice. Then the chief would choose one of the number for his own household, and the warriors would "gamble" for the rest! Oh! these were fearful hours!

Sometimes I wished that I could see her again—once before I died. And then reflection whispered me, it were better not. The knowledge of *my* fate would only add fresh bitterness to hers. Oh! these were fearful hours!

I looked at the savage tournament. There were feats of arms, and feats of equitation. Men rode at a gallop, with one foot only to be seen over the horse; and in this attitude, threw the javelin, or shot the unerring shaft. Others vaulted from horse to horse, as they swept over the prairie at racing speed! Some leaped to their saddles while their horses were running at a gallop! and some exhibited feats with the lasso. Then there was a mock encounter, in which the warriors unhorsed each other, as knights of the olden time!

It was, in fact, a magnificent spectacle—a grand hippodrome of the desert, but I had no eyes for it.

It had more attraction for Sanchez. I saw that he was observing every new feat with interested attention. All at once he became restless. There was a strange expression on his face. Some thought—some sudden resolve—had taken possession of him.

"Say to your braves," said he, speaking to one of our guards, in the Navajo tongue, "say that I can beat the best of them at that. I could teach them to ride a horse."

The savage reported what his prisoner had said; and shortly after several mounted warriors rode up, and replied to the taunt.

"You! a poor white slave, ride with the warriors of Navajo! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Can you ride upon your head?" inquired the torero.

"On our heads? How?"

"Standing upon your head, while your horse is in a gallop."

"No—nor you—nor any one. We are

the best riders on the plains—we cannot do that."

"*I* can," affirmed the bull-fighter with emphasis.

"He is boasting—he is a fool," shouted several.

"Let us see!" cried one. "Give him a horse—there is no danger."

"Give me my *own* horse, and I will show you."

"Which is *your* horse?"

"None of them, now, I suppose; but bring me that spotted mustang, and clear me a hundred lengths of him on the prairie, and I will teach you a trick."

As I looked to ascertain what horse Sanchez meant, I saw the mustang which he had ridden from the Del Norté. I noticed my own favourite, too, browsing with the rest.

After a short consultation among themselves, the torero's request was acceded to. The horse, he had pointed out, was lassoed

out of the caballada and brought up; and our comrade's thongs were taken off. The Indians had no fear of his escaping. They knew that they could soon overtake such a steed as the spotted mustang; moreover there was a picket constantly kept at each entrance of the valley. Even could he beat them across the plains, it would be impossible for him to get out to the open country. The valley itself was a prison!

Sanchez was not long in making his preparations. He strapped a buffalo-skin tightly on the back of his horse; and then led him round for some time in a circle —keeping him in the same track.

After practising thus for a while, he dropped the bridle, and uttered a peculiar cry —on hearing which the animal fell into a slow gallop around the circle. When the horse had accomplished two or three rounds, the torero leaped upon his back, and performed the well-known feat of riding on his head!

Although a common one among professional equestrians, it was new to the Navajoes, who looked on with shouts of wonder and admiration. They caused the torero to repeat it again, and again, until the spotted mustang had become all of one colour!

Sanchez, however, did not leave off, until he had given his spectators the full programme of the "ring," and had fairly "astonished the natives!"

When the tournament was ended, and we were "hauled" back to the river side, the torero was not with us! Fortunate Sanchez! He had won his life. Henceforth he was to be riding-master to the Navajo nation!

CHAPTER XII.

RUNNING A MUCK.

ANOTHER day came—*our* day for action. We saw our enemies making their preparations. We saw them go off to the woods, and return bringing clubs freshly cut from the trees. We saw them dress as for ball play or running.

At an early hour we were taken forward to the front of the temple. On arriving there, I cast my eyes upward to the terrace. My betrothed was above me—I was recognised!

There was mud upon my spare garments, and spots of blood—there was dust on my hair—there were scars upon my arms—my face and throat were stained with powder—blotches of black burnt powder—in spite of all I was recognised! The eyes of love saw through all.

I find no scene, in all my experience, so difficult to describe as this. Why? There was none so terrible—none in which so many wild emotions were crowded into a moment. A love like ours—tantalised by proximity—almost within reach of each other's embrace—yet separated by relentless fate, and that for ever! The knowledge of each other's situation—the certainty of *my* death, and *her* dishonour. These and a hundred like thoughts rushed into our hearts together. They could not be detailed. They cannot be described. Words would not express them. You may summon fancy to your aid.

I heard her screams, her wild words, and wilder weeping. I saw her snowy cheek and streaming hair, as—frantic—she rushed forward on the parapet, as if to spring out! I witnessed her struggles as she was drawn back by her fellow captives: and then, all at once, she was quiet in their arms! She had fainted, and was borne out of my sight.

I was tied by the wrists and ankles. During the scene I had twice risen to my feet—forced up by my emotions—but only to fall down again!

I made no further effort, but lay upon the ground, in the agony of impotence.

It was but a short moment; but oh! the feelings that passed over my soul in that moment. It was the compressed misery of a life-time! * * *

For a period of perhaps half-an-hour I regarded not what was going on around me. My mind was not abstracted, but obstructed —absolutely dead. I had no thoughts about anything!

I awoke at length from this stupor. I saw that the savages had completed their preparations for the cruel sport.

Two rows of men extended across the plain to a distance of several hundred yards. They were armed with clubs, and stood facing each other with an interval of three or four paces between their ranks. Down the interval, *we* were to run—receiving blows—from every one who could give them —as we passed! Should any of us succeed in running through the whole line, and reach the mountain foot before we could be overtaken, *the promise was, that our lives should be spared!*

"Is this true, Sanchez?" I whispered to the torero, who was standing near me.

"No," was the reply, given also in a whisper. "It is only a trick to make you run the better, and show them more sport. You are to die all the same. I heard them say so."

Indeed, it would have been slight grace had they given us our lives on such conditions; for it would have been impossible for the strongest and swiftest man to have passed through between their lines.

"Sanchez!" I said again, addressing the torero; "Seguin was your friend. You will do all you can for *her?*"

Sanchez well knew whom I meant.

"I will, I will!" he replied, seeming deeply affected.

"Brave Sanchez! tell her how I felt for her—no—no—you need not tell her that."

I scarce knew what I was saying.

"Sanchez," I again whispered, a thought that had been in my mind now returning, "could you not—a knife—a weapon—anything—could you not drop one, when I am set loose?"

"It would be of no use. You could not escape if you had fifty."

"It may be, not. I would try. At the

worst, I can but die; and better die with a weapon in my hands!"

"It would be better," mutterred the torero, in reply. "I will try to help you to a weapon, but my life may be—" he paused. "If you look behind you," he continued, in a significant manner, while he appeared to examine the tops of the distant mountains, "you may see a tomakawk. I think it is held carelessly. It might be snatched."

I understood his meaning, and stole a glance around. Dacoma was at a few paces distance, superintending the start. I saw the weapon in his belt. It *was* loosely stuck. *It might be snatched!*

I possess extreme tenacity of life, with energy to preserve it. I have not illustrated this energy in the adventures through which we have passed; for, up to a late period, I was merely a passive spectator of the scenes enacted, and in general disgusted with their enactment. But at other times

I have proved the existence of these traits in my character. In the the field of battle, to my knowledge, I have saved my life three times by the quick perception of danger, and the promptness to ward it off. Either *less* or *more* brave, I should have lost it! This may seem an enigma. It appears a puzzle. It is an experience.

In my earlier life, I was addicted to what are termed "manly sports." In running and leaping I never met my superior; and my feats in such exercises are still recorded in the memories of my college companions.

Do not wrong me, and think that I am boasting of these peculiarities. The first is but an accident in my mental character—the others are only rude accomplishments, which—now in my more matured life—I see but little reason to be proud of. I mention them only to illustrate what follows.

Ever since the hour of my capture, I had busied my mind with plans of escape. Not the slightest opportunity had as yet offered. All along the journey we had been guarded with the most zealous vigilance.

During this last night a new plan had occupied me. It had been suggested by seeing Sanchez upon his horse.

I had matured it all to the getting possession of a weapon; and I *had* hopes of escape, although I had neither time nor opportunity to detail them to the torero. It would have served no purpose to have told him now.

I knew that I *might* escape, even without the weapon; but I needed it, in case there might be in the tribe a faster runner than myself. I might be killed in the attempt —that was likely enough—but I knew that death could not come in a worse shape than that in which I was to meet it on the morrow. Weapon or no weapon, I was

resolved to escape, or die in attempting it.

I saw them untying O'Cork. He was to run first.

There was a circle of savages around the starting point—old men and idlers of the village—who stood there only to witness the sport.

There was no apprehension of our escaping. That was never thought of. An enclosed valley, with guards at each entrance. Plenty of horses standing close by, that could be mounted in a few minutes. It would be impossible for any of us to get away from the ground. At least so thought they.

O'Cork started.

Poor Barney! His race was not a long one. He had not run ten paces down the living avenue, when he was knocked over, and carried back—bleeding and senseless—amidst the yells of the delighted crowd.

Another of the men shared a similar fate; and another; and then they unbound *me*.

I rose to my feet; and, during the short

interval allowed me, stretched my limbs, imbuing my soul and body, with all the energy that desperate circumstances enabled me to concentrate within them.

The signal was again given for the Indians to be ready, and they were soon in their places, brandishing their long clubs, and impatiently waiting for me to make the start.

Dacoma was behind me! With a side glance, I had marked well where he stood; and, backing towards him—under pretence of getting a fairer "break,"—I came close up to the savage. Then suddenly wheeling—with the spring of a cat and the dexterity of a thief, I caught the tomahawk, and jerked it from his belt!

I aimed a blow, but in my hurry, missed him. I had no time for another. I turned and ran. *He* was so taken by surprise, that I was out of his reach, before he could make a motion to follow me!

I ran, not for the open avenue, but to one side of the circle of spectators—where were the old men and idlers.

These had drawn their hand weapons, and were closing towards me in a thick rank. Instead of endeavouring to break through them—which I doubted my ability to accomplish—I threw all my energy into the spring, and leaped clear over their shoulders. Two or three stragglers struck at me, as I passed them, but missed their aim; and the next moment I was out upon the open plain, with the whole village yelling at my heels!

I knew well for what I was running. Had it not been for that, I should never have made the start. *I was running for the caballada!*

I was running, too, for my life, and I required no encouragement to induce me to make the best of it.

I soon distanced those who had been nearest me at starting; but the swiftest of

the Indians were the young men who had formed the lines; and I saw that these were now forging ahead of the others.

Still they were not gaining upon *me*. My school training stood me a service now.

After a mile's chase, I saw that I was within less than half that distance of the caballada, and at least three hundred yards ahead of my pursuers; but to my horror, as I glanced back, I saw mounted men! They were still far behind, but I knew they would soon come up. Was it possible *he* could hear me?

I knew that in these elevated regions sounds are heard twice the ordinary distance; and I shouted, at the top of my voice, "Moro! Moro!"

I did not halt, but ran on, calling as I went.

I saw a sudden commotion among the horses. Their heads were tossed up; and then one dashed out from the drove, and

came galloping towards me. I knew the broad black chest and red muzzle. I knew them at a glance. It was my brave steed—my Moro!

The rest followed, trooping after; but before they were up, to trample me, I had met my horse; and flung myself, panting, upon his back!

I had no rein; but my favourite was used to the guidance of my voice, hands, and knees; and, directing him through the herd, I headed for the western end of the valley. I heard the yells of the mounted savages as I cleared the caballada; and, looking back, I saw a string of twenty or more coming after me, as fast as their horses could gallop!

But I had no fear of them now. I knew my Moro too well; and after I had cleared the ten miles of valley, and was springing up the steep front of the sierra, I saw my pursuers still back upon the plain, at a distance of miles!

CHAPTER XIII.

A CONFLICT UPON A CLIFF.

My horse—idle for days—had recovered his full action; and bore me up the rocky path with proud springy step. My nerves drew vigour from his, and the strength of my body was fast returning. It was well. I would soon be called upon to use it. *The picket was still to be passed!*

While escaping from the town—in the excitement of the more proximate peril—I had not thought of this ulterior one. I now remembered it. It flashed upon me of

a sudden; and I commenced gathering my resolution to meet it.

I knew there *was* a picket upon the mountain. Sanchez had said so. He had heard *them* say so. What number of men composed it? Sanchez had said two; but he was not certain of this. Two would be enough—more than enough for me—still weak—and armed, as I was, with a weapon in the use of which I had little skill.

How would *they* be armed? Doubtless with bows, lances, tomahawks, and knives. Every odds were against me!

At what point should I find them? They were videttes. Their chief duty was to watch the plains without. They would be at some station, then, commanding a view of these.

I remembered the road well—the same by which we had first entered the valley. There was a platform near the western brow of the sierra. I recollected it, for we had halted upon it, while our guide went for-

ward to reconnoitre. A cliff overhung this platform. I remembered that too—for during the absence of the guide, Seguin and I had dismounted, and climbed it. It commanded a view of the whole outside country to the south and west. No doubt then, on that very cliff would the videttes be stationed.

Would they be on its top? If so, it might be best to make a dash, and pass them, before tehy could descend to the road, running the risk of their missiles—their arrows and lances? Make a dash! No—that would be impossible. I remembered that the path at both ends of the platform, narrowed to a width of only a few feet—with the cliff rising above it, and the cañon yawning below. It was, in fact, only a ledge of the precipice, along which it was dangerous to pass even at a walk. Moreover I had re-shod my horse at the mission. The iron was worn smooth; and I knew that the rock was as slippery as glass!

All these thoughts passed through my mind, as I neared the summit of the sierra. The prospect was appalling. The peril before me was extreme; and under other circumstances, I would have hesitated to encounter it. But I knew that that which threatened from behind was not less desperate. There was no alternative; and, with only half-formed resolutions as to how I should act, I pushed forward.

I rode with caution, directing my horse as well as I could upon the softer parts of the trail—so that his hoof-strokes might not be heard. At every turn, I halted; and scanned the profile of each new prospect. But I did not halt longer than I could help. I knew that I had no time to waste.

The road ascended through a thin wood of cedars and dwarf piñons. It wound, zig-zag, up the face of the mountain. Near the crest of the sierra it obliqued sharply to the right, and trended in to the brow of the

cañon. There the ledge, already mentioned, became the path ; and the road followed its narrow terrace along the very face of the precipice.

On reaching this point I caught view of the cliff where I expected to see the vidette. I had guessed correctly. He was there, and to my agreeable surprise, there was only one —a single savage!

He was seated upon the very topmost rock of the sierra ; and his large brown body was distinctly visible, outlined against the pale blue sky. He was not more than three hundred yards from me, and about a third of that distance above the level of the ledge, along which I had to pass.

I halted the moment I caught sight of him ; and sat, making a hurried reconnoissance. As yet he had neither seen nor heard me. His back was to me, and he appeared to be gazing intently toward the west. Beside the rock on which he was,

his spear was sticking in the ground, and his shield, bow and quiver were leaning against it. I could see upon his person the sparkle of a knife and tomahawk.

I have said my reconnoissance was a hurried one. I was conscious of the value of every moment; and, almost at a glance, I formed my resolution. That was, to "run the gauntlet," and attempt passing before the Indian could descend to intercept me. Obedient to this impulse, I gave my animal the signal to move forward.

I rode slowly and cautiously—for two reasons: because my horse dared not go otherwise; and I thought that, by riding quietly, I might get beyond the vidette without attracting his notice. The torrent was hissing below. Its roar ascended to the cliff. It might drown the hoof-stroke.

With this hope I stole onward. My eye passed rapidly from one to the other—from

the savage on the cliff, to the perilous path along which my horse crawled, shivering with affright.

When I had advanced about six lengths upon the ledge, the platform came in view; and with it, a group of objects, that caused me to reach suddenly forward, and grasp the forelock of my Moro—a sign by which, in the absence of a bit, I could always halt him. He came at once to a stand; and I surveyed the objects before me with a feeling of despair.

They were two horses,—mustangs; and a man—an Indian. The mustangs, bridled and saddled, were standing quietly out upon the platform; and a lasso, tied to the bit-ring of one of them, was coiled around the wrist of the Indian. The latter was sitting upon his hams, close up to the cliff—so that his back touched the rock. His arms lay horizontally across his knees, and upon these his head rested. I saw that he was asleep!

Beside him were his bow and quiver, his lance and shield,—all leaning against the cliff.

My situation was a terrible one. I knew that I could not pass *him* without being heard, and I knew that *pass him I must.* In fact, I could not have gone back had I wished it—for I had already embarked upon the ledge, and was riding along a narrow shelf, where my horse could not possibly have turned himself!

All at once, the idea entered my mind, that I might slip to the ground, steal forward, and with my tomahawk——

It was a cruel thought, but it was the impulse of instinct—the instinct of self-preservation.

It was not decreed that I should adopt so fearful an alternative. Moro, impatient at being delayed in the perilous position, snorted and struck the rock with his hoof. The clink of the iron was enough for the sharp ears of the Spanish horses. They

neighed on the instant. The savages sprang to their feet; and their simultaneous yell told me that both had discovered me!

I saw the vidette upon the cliff pluck up his spear, and commence hurrying downward; but my attention was soon exclusively occupied with his comrade.

The latter, on seeing me, had leaped to his feet, seized his bow, and vaulted, as if mechanically, upon the back of his mustang. Then, uttering a wild shout, he trotted over the platform, and advanced along the ledge to meet me!

An arrow whizzed past my head as he came up, but in his hurry he had aimed badly.

Our horses' heads met. They stood muzzle to muzzle with eyes dilated—their red nostrils steaming into each other. Both snorted fiercely, as if each was imbued with the wrath of his rider. They seemed to know that a death strife was between us.

They seemed conscious, too, of their own danger. They had met at the very narrowest part of the ledge. Neither could have turned or backed off again. One or other must go over the cliff—must fall through a thousand feet into the stony channel of the torrent!

I sat with a feeling of utter helplessness. I had no weapon with which I could reach my antagonist—no missile. *He* had his bow; and I saw him adjusting a second arrow to the string!

At this crisis, three thoughts passed through my mind—not as I detail them here—but following each other, like quick flashes of lightning. My first impulse was to urge my horse forward; trusting to his superior weight to precipitate the lighter animal from the ledge. Had I been worth a bridle and spurs, I would have adopted this plan. But I had neither; and the chance was too desperate without them.

I abandoned it for another. I would hurl my tomahawk at the head of my antagonist. No! The third thought—I will dismount, and use my weapon upon the mustang.

This last was clearly the best; and, obedient to its impulse, I slipped down between Moro and the cliff. As I did so, I heard the "hist" of another arrow passing my cheek. It had missed me from the suddenness of my movements.

In an instant, I squeezed past the flanks of my horse; and glided forward upon the ledge, directly in front of that of my adversary.

The animal, seeming to guess my intentions, snorted with affright and reared up; but was compelled to drop again into the same tracks.

The Indian was fixing another shaft. Its notch never reached the string. As the hoofs of the mustang came down upon the rock, I aimed my blow. I struck the

animal over the eye. I felt the skull yielding before my hatchet; and the next moment horse and rider—the latter screaming and struggling to clear himself of the saddle—disappeared over the cliff.

There was a moment's silence — a long moment—in which I knew they were falling —falling—down that fearful depth. Then came a loud plash—the percussion of their united bodies on the water below!

I had no curiosity to look over, and as little time. When I regained my upright attitude—for I had come to my knees in giving the blow—I saw the vidette just leaping upon the platform. He did not halt a moment, but advanced at a run, holding his spear at a charge.

I saw that I would be impaled, unless I could parry the thrust. I struck wildly, but with success. The lance blade glinted from the head of my weapon. Its shaft passed me; and our bodies met with a con-

cussion that caused us both to reel upon the very edge of the cliff!

As soon as I had recovered my balance, I followed up my blows, keeping close to my antagonist—so that he could not again use his lance. Seeing this, he dropped the weapon, and drew his tomahawk. We now fought hand to hand—hatchet to hatchet!

Back and forward along the ledge we drove each other—as the advantage of the blows told in our favour, or against us.

Several times we grappled, and would have pushed each other over; but the fear that each felt of being dragged after, mutually restrained us; and we let go, and trusted again to our tomahawks.

Not a word passed between us. We had nothing to say—even could we have understood each other. But we had no boast to make—no taunt to urge—nothing before our minds, but the fixed dark purpose of murdering each other!

After the first onset, the Indian had ceased yelling, and we both fought with the intense earnestness of silence.

There were sounds though—an occasional sharp exclamation—our quick high breathing—the clinking of our tomahawks—the neighing of our horses—and the continuous roar of the torrent. These were the symphonies of our conflict.

For some minutes we battled upon the ledge. We were both cut and bruised in several places; but neither of us had as yet received or inflicted a mortal wound.

At length—after a continuous shower of blows—I succeeded in beating my adversary back, until we found ourselves out upon the platform. There we had ample room to wind our weapons; and we struck with more energy than ever. After a few strokes, our tomahawks met with a violent concussion, that sent them flying from our hands.

Neither dare stoop to regain his weapon; and we rushed upon each other with naked arms, clutched, wrestled a moment, and then fell together to the earth.

I thought my antagonist had a knife. I must have been mistaken; else he would have used it. But without it, I soon found that in this species of encounter he was my master. His muscular arms encircled me, until my ribs cracked under the embrace. We rolled along the ground—over and over each other. O God! we were nearing the edge of the precipice!

I could not free myself from his grasp. His sinewy fingers were across my throat. They clasped me tightly around the trachea —stopping my breath. He was strangling me!

I grew weak and nerveless. I could resist no longer. I felt my hold relax. I grew weaker and weaker. I was dying—I was —O God—I—O Heaven pard—on—Oh——

* * * * * *

I could not have been long insensible, for when consciousness returned, I was still warm—sweating from the effects of the struggle—and my wounds were bleeding freshly and freely! I felt that I yet lived. I saw that I was still upon the platform; but where was my antagonist? Why had he not finished me? Why had he not flung me over the cliff?

I rose upon my elbow, and looked around. I could see no living thing, but my own horse and that of the Indian, that galloped over the platform, kicking and plunging at each other.

But I heard sounds—sounds of fearful import—like the hoarse angry worrying of dogs, mingling with the cries of a human voice—a voice uttered in agony!

What could it mean? I saw that there was a break in the platform—a deep cut in the rock—and out of this the sounds appeared to issue.

I rose to my feet, and tottering toward the spot, looked in. It was an awful sight to look upon. The gully was some ten feet in depth; and, at its bottom, among the weeds and cacti, a huge dog was engaged in tearing something that screamed and struggled. It was a man—an Indian. All was explained at a glance. The dog was Alp—the man was my late antagonist!

As I came upon the edge, the dog was on top of his adversary, and kept himself uppermost by desperate bounds from side to side—still dashing the other back as he attempted to rise to his feet. The savage was crying in despair. I thought I saw the teeth of the animal fast in his throat; but I watched the struggle no longer. Voices from behind caused me to turn round. My pursuers had reached the cañon, and were urging their animals along the ledge!

I staggered up to my horse; and, climb-

ing upon his back, once more directed him to the terrace—that part which led outward. In a few minutes I had cleared the cliff, and was hurrying down the mountain. As I approached its foot I heard a rustling in the bushes, that, on both sides, lined the path. Then an object sprang out a short distance behind me. It was the San Bernard.

As he came alongside, he uttered a low whimper; and once or twice wagged his tail. I knew not how he could have escaped—for he must have waited until the Indians reached the platform—but the fresh blood that stained his jaws, and clotted the shaggy hair upon his breast, showed that he had left one with but little power to detain him.

On reaching the plain, I looked back. I saw my pursuers coming down the face of the sierra; but I had still nearly half a mile of start; and, taking the snowy mountain for my guide, I struck out into the open prairie.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN UNEXPECTED RENCONTRE.

As I rode off from the mountain foot, the white peaks glistened at a distance of thirty miles. There was not a hillock between. Not a break or bush, excepting the low shrubs of the *artemisia*.

It was not yet noon. Could I reach the snow mountains before sunset? If so, I trusted in being able to follow our old trail to the mine. Thence I might keep on to the Del Norté, by striking a branch of the Paloma, or some other lateral stream.

Such were my plans, undefined as I rode forth.

I knew that I should be pursued, almost to the gates of El Paso; and, when I had ridden forward about a mile, a glance to the rear showed me that the Indians had just reached the plain, and were striking out after me.

It was no longer a question of speed. I knew that I had the heels of their whole cavalcade. Did my horse possess the "bottom?"

I knew the tireless, wiry nature of the Spanish mustang; and their animals were of that race. I knew they could gallop for a long day without breaking down; and this led me to fear for the result.

Speed was nothing now, and I made no attempt to keep it up. I was determined to economise the strength of my steed. I could not be overtaken so long as *he* lasted; and I galloped slowly forward,

watching the movements of my pursuers, and keeping a regular distance ahead of them.

At times I dismounted, to relieve my horse, and ran alongside of him. My dog followed—occasionally looking up in my face, and seemingly conscious why I was making such a hurried journey.

During all the day I was never out of sight of the Indians—in fact, I could have distinguished their arms, and counted their numbers at any time. There was in all about a score of horsemen. The stragglers had gone back, and only the well mounted men now continued the pursuit.

As I neared the foot of the snowy peak, I remembered there was water at our old camping ground in the pass; and I pushed my horse faster, in order to gain time to refresh both him and myself. I intended to make a short halt, and allow the noble brute to breathe himself, and snatch a bite of the

bunch-grass that grew around the spring. There was nothing to fear so long as his strength held out; and I knew that this was the plan to sustain it.

It was near sundown as I entered the defile. Before riding in among the rocks, I looked back. During the last hour I had gained upon my pursuers. They were still at least three miles out upon the plain—and I saw that they were toiling on wearily.

I fell into a train of reflection as I rode down the ravine. I was now upon a known trail. My spirits rose. My hopes, so long clouded over, began to assume a brightness and buoyancy—greater from the very influence of reaction. I would still be able to rescue my betrothed. My whole energies—my fortune—my life—would be devoted to this one object. I would raise a band stronger than ever Seguin had commanded. I would get followers among the returning *em-*

ployés of the caravan—teamsters, whose term of services had expired. I would search the posts and mountain rendezvous for trappers and hunters. I would apply to the Mexican government for aid—in money—in troops. I would appeal to the citizens of El Paso—of Chihuahua—of Durango.

"Geehosaphat! hyurs a feller ridin' 'ithout eyther saddle or bridle!"

Five or six men with rifles sprang out from the rocks, surrounding me.

"May an Injun eat me ef 'taint the young fellur as tuk me for a grizzly! Billee! look hyur! hyur he is—the very fellur! He! he! he! ho-ho-hoo!"

"Rube! Garey!"

"What! by Jove! it's my friend, Haller. Hurrah! old fellow, don't you know me?"

"St. Vrain!"

"That it is. Don't I look like him? It would have been a harder task to identify you, but for what the old trapper has been

telling us about you. But come! how have you got out of the hands of the Philistines?"

"First tell me who you all are? What are you doing here?"

"Oh, we're a picket. The army is below."

"The army?"

"Why we call it so. There's six hundred of us; and that's about as big an army as usually travels in these parts."

"But who? What are they?"

"They are of all sorts and colours. There's Chihuahuenos and Paseños, and niggers, and hunters, and trappers, and teamsters—your humble servant commands these last named gentry—and then there's the band of your friend Seguin——"

"Seguin! Is he——"

"What? He's at the head of all. But come, they're camped down by the spring. Let us go down. You don't look over-fed; and, old fellow, there's a drop of the best Paso in my saddle-bags. Come!"

"Stop a moment! I am pursued."

"Pursued!" echoed the hunters—together raising their rifles and looking up the ravine. "How many?"

"About twenty."

"Are they close upon you?"

"No."

"How long before we may expect them?"

"They are three miles back, with tired horses, as you may suppose."

Three quarters—half an hour at any rate. Come we will have time to go down, and make arrangements for their reception. Rube! you, with the rest, can remain here. We will join you before they get forward. Come, Haller, come!"

Following my faithful and warm-hearted friend, I rode on to the spring. Around it I found "the army;" and it had somewhat of that appearance—for two or three hundred of the men were in uniform. These were the volunteer guards of Chihuahua and El Paso.

The late "raid" of the Indians had exasperated the inhabitants, and this unusually strong muster was the consequence. Seguin had met them with the remnant of his band at El Paso, and hurried them forward on the Navajo trail. It was from him St. Vrain had heard of my capture; and, in hopes of rescuing me, had joined the expedition with about forty or fifty employés of the caravan.

Most of Seguin's band had escaped after the fight in the barranca; and among the rest, I was rejoiced to hear—El Sol and La Luna. They were now on their return with Seguin; and I found them at his tent.

Seguin welcomed me as the bearer of joyful news. *They* were still safe. That was all I could tell him, and all he asked for, during our hurried congratulation.

We had no time for idle talk. A hundred men immediately mounted, and rode up the ravine. On reaching the ground occupied by the picket, they led their horses

behind the rocks and formed an ambuscade. The order was that all the Indians must be killed or taken!

The plan hastily agreed upon was, to let them pass the ambushed men and ride on — until they had got in sight of the main body. Then both divisions were to close upon them.

It was a dry ravine above the spring, and the horses had made no tracks upon its rocky bed. Moreover the Indians—ardent, in their pursuit of me—would not be on the look out for any "sign" before reaching the water. Should they pass the ambuscade, then would not a man of them escape, as the defile on both sides was walled in by a precipice.

After the others had gone, about a hundred men at the spring, leaped into their saddles, and sat with their eyes bent up the pass.

They were not kept long in waiting. A few minutes after the ambuscade had been placed, an Indian showed himself round an

angle of the rock, about two hundred yards above the spring. He was the foremost of the warriors and must have passed the ambushed horsemen; but as yet the latter lay still. Seeing a body of men, the savage halted with a quick jerk; and then, uttering a cry, wheeled, and rode back upon his comrades. These, imitating his example, wheeled also; but before they had fairly turned themselves, in the ravine the cachéd horsemen sprang out from the rocks, and came galloping down.

The Indians now seeing that they were completely in the trap—with overpowering numbers on both sides of them—threw down their spears, and begged for mercy!

In a few minutes they were all captured. The whole affair did not occupy half an hour; and, with our prisoners securely tied, we returned to the spring.

The leading men now gathered around Seguin to settle on some plan for attacking the town. Should we move on to it that night?

I was asked for my advice, and, of course answered, yes. The sooner the better, for the safety of the captives. My feelings, as well as those of Seguin, could not brook delay. Besides, several of our late comrades were to die on the morrow. We might still be in time to save them.

How were we to approach the valley?

This was the next point to be discussed.

The enemy would now be certain to have their videttes at both ends; and it promised to be a clear moonlight until morning. They could easily see such a large body approaching from the open plain. Here then was a difficulty.

"Let us divide," said one of Seguin's old band, "Let a party go in at each end. That'll git 'em in the trap."

"Wagh!" replied another, "that would never do. Thars ten miles o' rough wood thar. If we raised the niggers by such a show as this, they'd take to them—gals an' all—an' that's the last we'd see o' them."

This speaker was clearly in the right. It would never do to make our attack openly. Stratagem must again be used.

A head was now called into the council that soon mastered the difficulty, as it had many another. That was the skinless earless head of the trapper Rube.

"Cap," said he, after a short delay, "'Ee needn't show yur crowd till we've first tuk the luk-outs by the eend o' the kenyun."

"How can we take them?" inquired Seguin.

"Strip them twenty niggurs," replied Rube, pointing to our captives, "an' let twenty o' us put on their duds. Then we kin take the young fellur, him hyur as tuk me for the grizzly—he-he-he!—old Rube tuk for a grizzly! we kin take him back a pris'ner. Now, Cap, do 'ee see how?"

"You would have these twenty to keep far in the advance then; capture the vi-

dettes—and wait till the main body comes up?"

"Sartinly—thets my idee—adzactly."

"It is the best—the only one. We will follow it." And Seguin immediately ordered the Indians to be stripped of their dresses. These consisted mostly of garments that had been plundered from the people of the Mexican towns, and were of all cuts and colours.

"I'd recommend 'ee, Cap," suggested Rube, seeing that Seguin was looking out to choose the men for this advance party. "I'd recommend 'ee to take a smart sprinklin o' the Delawars. Them Navaghs is mighty cute, and not easy bamfoozled. They mout sight white skin by moonlight. Them o' us that must go along 'll hev to paint Injun, or we'll be fooled arter all —*we* will."

Seguin taking this hint, selected for the advance most of the Delaware and Shawano

Indians ; and these were now dressed in the clothes of the Navajoes. He himself with Rube, Garey, and a few other whites made up the required number. I, of course, was to go along, and play the role of a prisoner.

The whites of the party soon accomplished their change of dress, and "painted Injun"—a trick of the prairie toilet well known to all of them.

Rube had but little change to make. His hue was already of sufficient deepness for the disguise; and he was not going to trouble himself by throwing off the old shirt or leggings. That could hardly have been done, without cutting both open, and Rube was not likely to make such a sacrifice of his favourite buckskins. He proceeded to draw the other garments over them; and, in a short time, was habited in a pair of slashing calzoneros with bright buttons from the hip to the ankle. These with a smart tight-fitting jacket—that

had fallen to his share—and a jaunty sombrero cocked upon his head, gave him the air of a most comical dandy! The men fairly yelled at seeing him thus metamorphosed; and old Rube himself grinned heartily at the odd feelings which the dress occasioned him.

Before the sun had set, everything was in readiness, and the advance started off. The main body, under St. Vrain, was to follow an hour after. A few men—Mexicans—were to remain by the spring, in charge of the Navajo prisoners.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RESCUE.

We struck directly across the plain for the eastern entrance of the valley. We reached the cañon about two hours before day. Everything turned out as we had anticipated. There was an outpost of five Indians at the end of the pass, but we had stolen upon them unawares, and they were captured without the necessity of our firing a shot.

The main body came up soon after; and, preceded by our party as before, passed through the cañon. Arriving at the border

of the woods, nearest the town, we halted and cachéd among the trees.

The town was glistening in the clear moonlight, and deep silence was over the valley. There were none stirring at so early an hour, but we could descry two or three dark objects down by the river. We knew them to be the sentinels that stood over our captive comrades. The sight was gratifying, for it told us they still lived. They little dreamt, poor fellows, how near was the hour of their deliverance. For the same reasons that had influenced us on a former occasion, the attack was not to be made until daybreak, and we waited as before, but with a very different prospect. There were now six hundred warriors in the town—about our own number—and we knew that a desperate engagement was before us. We had no fear as to the result, but we feared that the vengeful savages might take it into their heads to despatch their captives

while we fought. They knew that to recover these was our main object; and, if themselves defeated, that would give them the satisfaction of a terrible vengeance.

All this we knew was far from improbable. But to guard against the *possibility* of such an event, every precaution was to be taken.

We were satisfied that the captive women were still in the temple. Rube assured us that it was their universal custom to keep new prisoners there for several days after their arrival—until they were finally distributed among the warriors. The queen, too, dwelt in this building.

It was resolved, then, that the disguised party should ride forward—conducting me as their prisoner—by the first light. That they should surround the temple, and by a clever *coup* secure the white captives. A signal then given on the bugle, or the first shots fired, was to bring the main body forward at a gallop.

This was plainly the best plan; and

having fully arranged its details, we waited the approach of the dawn.

It was not long in coming. The moonlight became mixed with the blue rays of the aurora, and objects were seen more distinctly. As the milky quartz caught the hues of morning, we rode out of our cover, and forward over the plain. I was apparently tied upon my horse, and guarded between two of the Delawares!

On approaching the town we saw several men upon the roofs. They ran to and fro, summoning others out; and large groups began to appear along the terraces. As we came nearer we were greeted with shouts of congratulation!

Avoiding the streets, we pushed directly for the temple, at a brisk trot. On arriving at its base we suddenly halted —flung ourselves from our horses—and climbed the ladders. There were many women upon the parapets of the building.

Among these, Seguin recognised his daughter—the queen. She was at once secured and forced into the inside. The next moment I held my betrothed in my arms, while her mother was by our side. The other captives were there; and without waiting to offer any explanation, we hurried them all within the rooms, and guarded the doors with our pistols.

The whole manœuvre had not occupied two minutes; but before its completion a wild cry announced that the *ruse* was detected. Vengeful yells rang over the town, and the warriors, leaping down from their houses, ran towards the temple.

Arrows began to hurtle around us; but above all other sounds, pealed the notes of the bugle, summoning our comrades to the attack.

Quick upon the signal, they were seen debouching from the woods, and coming down at a gallop.

When within two hundred yards of the houses, the charging horsemen split into two divisions, and wheeled round the town, with the intention of attacking it on both sides.

The Indians ran to defend the skirts of the village; but in spite of their arrow-flights, that dismounted several, the horsemen closed in; and flinging themselves from their horses, fought hand to hand among the walls. The shouts of defiance—the sharp ringing of rifles—and the louder reports of the escopettes, announced that the battle was fairly begun.

A large party, headed by El Sol and St. Vrain, had ridden up to the temple. Seeing that we had secured the captives, these too dismounted, and commenced an attack upon that side of the town, clambering up to the houses, and driving out the braves who defended them.

The fight became general. Shouts and shots rent the air. Men were seen

upon high roofs face to face in deadly and desperate conflict. Crowds of women, screaming and terrified, rushed along the terraces, or ran out upon the plain, making for the woods. Frightened horses, snorting and neighing, galloped through the streets, and off over the open prairie, with trailing bridles; while others, closed in corrals, plunged and broke over the walls. It was a wild scene—a terrific picture!

Through all, I was only a spectator. I was guarding a door of the temple, in which were our own friends. My elevated position gave me a view of the whole village; and I could trace the progress of the battle from house to house. I saw that many were falling on both sides, for the savages fought with the courage of despair. I had no fears for the result. The whites, too, had wrongs to redress; and, by the remembrance of these, were equally nerved for the struggle. In this kind of encounter they had the

advantage in arms. It was only on the plains that their savage foes were feared—when charging with their long and death-dealing lances.

As I continued to gaze over the azoteas, a scene riveted my attention, and I forgot all others. Upon a high roof two men were engaged in combat, fierce and deadly. Their brilliant dresses had attracted me, and I soon recognised the combatants. They were Dacoma and the Maricopa!

The Navajo fought with a spear, and I saw that the other held his rifle clubbed and empty!

When my eye first rested upon them, the latter had just parried a thrust, and was aiming a blow at his antagonist. It fell without effect; and Dacoma, turning quickly, brought his lance again to the charge. Before El Sol could ward it off, the thrust was given, and the weapon appeared to pass through his body!

I involuntarily uttered a cry, as I expected to see the noble Indian fall. What was my astonishment at seeing him brandish his tomahawk over his head, *rush up the spear,* and with a crashing blow, stretch the Navajo at his feet!

Drawn down by the impaling shaft, he fell over the body; but in a moment struggled up again; drew the long lance from his flesh; and, tottering forward to the parapet, shouted out—

"Come, Luna! *Our mother is avenged!*"

I saw the girl spring upon the roof, followed by Garey; and the next moment the wounded man sank, fainting in the arms of the trapper.

Rube, St. Vrain, and several others now climbed to the roof and commenced examining the wound. I watched them with feelings of painful suspense, for the character of this most singular man had inspired me with friendship. Presently, St. Vrain joined

me, and I was assured that the wound was not mortal. The Maricopa would live.

The battle was now ended. The warriors who survived had fled to the forest. Shots were heard only at intervals. An occasional shout—the shriek of some savage discovered lurking among the walls.

Many white captives had been found in the town, and were brought in front of the temple, guarded by the Mexicans. The Indian women had escaped to the woods during the engagement. It was well, for the hunters and volunteer soldiery—exasperated by wounds, and heated by the conflict, now raged around like Furies. Smoke ascended from many of the houses; flames followed, and the greater part of the town was soon reduced to a smouldering ruin.

We stayed all that day by the Navajo village, to recruit our animals, and prepare for our homeward journey across the desert. The plundered cattle were collected.

Some were slaughtered for immediate use, and the rest placed in charge of vaqueros, to be driven on the hoof. Most of the Indian horses were lassoed, and brought in—some to be ridden by the rescued captives, others as the booty of the conquerors. But it was not safe to remain long in the valley. There were other tribes of the Navajoes to the north, who would soon be down upon us. There were their allies,—the great nations of the Apaché to the south, and the Nijoras to the west—and we knew that all these would unite, and follow on our trail. The object of the expedition was attained, at least as far as its leader had designed it. A great number of captives were recovered, whose friends had long since mourned them as lost for ever.

It would be some time before they would renew those savage forays, in which they

had annually desolated the pueblos of the frontier.

By sunrise of the next day we had repassed the cañon, and were riding toward the Snowy Mountain.

CHAPTER XVI.

EL PASO DEL NORTÉ.

I WILL not describe the re-crossing of the desert plains. I will not detail the incidents of our homeward journey.

With all its hardships and weariness, to me it was a pleasant one. It is but pleasure to attend upon her we love; and that along the route was my chief duty. The smiles, I received, far more than repaid me for the labour, I underwent in its discharge. But it was not labour. It was no labour to fill her *zuages* with fresh water at every

spring or runlet—to spread the blanket softly over her saddle—to weave her a "quitasol" out of the broad leaves of the palmilla—to assist her in mounting and dismounting—no, that was not labour to me.

We were happy as we journeyed. I was happy, for I knew that I had fulfilled my contract, and won my bride; and the very remembrance of the perils through which we had so lately passed, heightened the happiness of both. But one thing cast an occasional gloom over our thoughts—the queen—Adele.

She was returning to the home of her childhood—not voluntarily, but as a captive—captive to her own kindred—her father and mother!

Throughout the journey, both these waited upon her with tender assiduity—almost constantly gazing at her with sad and silent looks. There was woe in their hearts.

We were not pursued; or, if so, our pur-

suers never came up. Perhaps we were not followed at all. The foe had been crippled and cowed by the terrible chastisement; and we knew it would be some time before they could muster force enough to take our trail. Still we lost not a moment, but travelled as fast as the *ganados* could be pushed forward.

In five days we reached the Barranca del Oro, and passed the old mine—the scene of our bloody conflict. During our halt among the ruined ranches, I strayed away from the rest—impelled by a painful curiosity, to see if aught remained of my late follower, or his fellow victim. I went to the spot where I had last seen their bodies. Yes. Two skeletons lay in front of the shaft, as cleanly picked by the wolves as if they had been dressed for the studio of an anatomist. It was all that remained of the unfortunate men.

After leaving the Barranca del Oro, we struck the head waters of the Rio Mimbres; and, keeping on the banks of that

stream, followed it down to the Del Norté. Next day we entered the pueblo of El Paso.

A scene of singular interest greeted us on our arrival. As we neared the town, the whole population flocked out to meet us. Some had come forth from curiosity—some to welcome us, and take part in the ceremony that hailed our triumphant return—but not a few impelled by far different motives. We had brought with us a large number of rescued captives—nearly fifty in all—and these were soon surrounded by a crowd of citizens. In that crowd were yearning mothers and fond sisters—lovers newly awakened from despair, and husbands who had not yet ceased to mourn. There were hurried inquiries, quick glances that betokened keen anxiety. There were "scenes" and shouts of joy, as each one recognised some long-lost object of a dear affection. But there were other scenes of a diverse character—scenes of woe and

wailing—for many of those who had gone forth, but a few days before, in the pride of health and the panoply of war—many came not back!

I was struck with one episode. A painful one to witness. Two women—of the poblana class—had laid hold upon one of the captives—a girl of, I should think, about ten years of age. Each claimed the girl for her daughter; and each of them held one of her arms—not rudely, but to hinder the other from carrying her off. A crowd had circled them, and both the women were urging their claims in loud and plaintive voices.

One stated the age of the girl—hastily narrated the history of her capture by the savages—and pointed to certain marks upon her person, to which she declared she was ready, at any moment to make "juramento." The other appealed to the spectators to look at the colour of the child's hair and

eyes—which slightly differed from that of the anti-claimant—and called upon them to note the resemblance she bore to another, who stood by—and who, she alleged, was the child's elder sister. Both talked at the same time, and kissed the girl repeatedly as they talked.

The little wild captive stood between the two, receiving their alternate embraces with a wondering and puzzled expression. She was, in truth, a most interesting child, habited in the Indian costume, and browned by the sun of the Desert. Whichever might have been the mother—it was evident she had no remembrance of either of them. *She had no mother!* In her infancy she had been carried off to the Desert; and, like the daughter of Seguin, had forgotten the scenes of her childhood. She had forgotten father—mother—all!

It was a scene—as I have said—painful to witness. The anguished looks of the women

—their passionate appeals—their wild but affectionate embraces, lavished upon the girl—their plaintive cries mingled with sobs and weeping. Indeed it was a painful scene.

It was brought to a close—at least as far as I witnessed it. The alcalde came upon the ground; and the girl was given in charge to the "policia," until the true mother should bring forward more definite proofs of maternity. I never heard the finale of this little romance.

The return of the expedition to El Paso was celebrated by a triumphant ovation. Cannon boomed—bells rang—fire works hissed and sputtered—masses were sung—and music filled the streets. There was feasting and merriment, and the night was turned into a blazing illumination of wax candles, and "un gran funcion debaile"—a *fandango*.

Next morning Seguin, with his wife and daughters, made preparation to journey on

to the old hacienda, on the Del Norté. The house was still standing—so we had heard. It had not been plundered! The savages—on taking possession of it—had been closely pressed by a body of Paseños; and had hurried off with their captives, leaving everything else as they had found it.

St. Vrain and I were to accompany the party to their home.

The chief had plans for the future, in which both I and my friend were interested. There were we to mature them.

I found the returns of my trading speculation even greater than St. Vrain had promised. My 10,000 dollars had trebled itself. St. Vrain, too, was master of a large amount, and we were enabled to bestow our bounty on those of our late comrades who had proved themselves worthy. But most of them had received "bounty" from another source.

As we rode out from El Paso, I chanced

to look back. There was a long string of dark objects waving over the gates. There was no mistaking what they were—for they were unlike anything else. *They were scalps*.

CHAPTER XVII.

TOUCHING THE CHORDS OF MEMORY.

It is the second evening after our arrival at the old house on the Del Norté. We have gone up to the azotéa—Seguin, St. Vrain, and myself. I know not why, but guided thither by our host. Perhaps he wishes to look once more over that wild land —the theatre of so many scenes in his eventful life:—once more, for upon the morrow he leaves it for ever. Our plans have been formed,—we journey upon the morrow—we are going over the broad plains to the waters of the Mississippi. *They* go with us.

It is a lovely evening, and warm. The atmosphere is elastic—such an atmosphere as you can find only on the high tables of the western world. It seems to act upon all animated nature, judging from its voices. There is joy in the songs of the birds,—in the humming of the homeward bee. There is a softness, too, in those sounds that reach us from the farther forest—those sounds usually harsh—the voices of the wilder and fiercer creatures of creation. All seem attuned to peace and love.

The song of the arriero is joyous—for many of these are below, packing for our departure.

I, too, am joyous. I have been so for days; but the light atmosphere around, and the bright prospect before me, have heightened the pulsations of my happiness.

Not so my companions on the azotéa. Both seem sad.

Seguin is silent, I thought he had climbed up here to take a last look of the fair valley.

Not so. He paces back and forth with folded arms—his eyes fixed upon the cemented roof. They see no farther. They see not at all. The eye of his mind only is active; and that is looking inward. His air is abstracted—his brow is clouded—his thoughts are gloomy and painful. I know the cause of all this. *She is still a stranger!*

But St. Vrain—the witty, the buoyant, the sparkling St. Vrain—what misfortune has befallen *him?* What cloud is crossing the rose-coloured field of *his* horoscope? What reptile is gnawing at *his* heart, that not even the seething wine of El Paso can drown? St. Vrain is speechless—St. Vrain is sighing—St. Vrain is sad! I half divine the cause. St. Vrain is——

The tread of light feet upon the stone stairway—the rustling of female dress!

They are ascending. They are Madame Seguin—Adele—Zöe.

I look at the mother—at her features. They, too, are shaded by a melancholy expression. Why is she not happy? Why not joyous, having recovered a long-lost, much-loved child? Ah! *she has not yet recovered her!*

I turn my eyes on the daughter—the elder one—the queen. That is the strangest expression of all.

Have you seen the captive ocelot? Have you seen the wild bird, that refuses to be tamed, but, against the bars of its cage prison still beats its bleeding wings? If so, it may help you to fancy that expression. *I* cannot depict it.

She is no longer in the Indian costume. That has been put aside. She wears the dress of civilised life; but, in despite, she wears it. She has shown this, for the skirt is torn in several places; and the boddice, plucked open, displays her bosom—half nude—heaving under the wild thoughts that agitate it.

She accompanies them, but not as a companion. She has the air of a prisoner—the air of the eagle, whose wings have been clipped. She regards neither mother nor sister. Their constant kindness has failed to impress her.

The mother has led her to the azotea, and let go her hand. She walks no longer with them; but crouching, and in starts, from place to place—obedient to the impulse of sinister emotions!

She has reached the western wing of the azotea, and stands close up against the parapet, gazing over—gazing upon the Mimbres! She knows them well—those peaks of sparkling selenite—those watch-towers of the desert land—she knows them well. Her heart is with her eyes.

We stand watching her—all of us. She is the common solicitude. She it is that keeps between all hearts and the light. The father looks sadly on—the mother looks

sadly on—Zöe looks sadly on—St. Vrain too. No! that is a different expression. *His* gaze is the gaze of——

She has turned suddenly. She perceives that we are all regarding her with attention. Her eyes wander from one to the other. They are fixed upon the glance of St. Vrain!

A change comes over her countenance—a sudden change—from dark to bright, like the cloud passing from the sun. Her eye is fired by a new expression. I know it well. I have seen it before—not in *her* eyes, but in those that resemble them—the eyes of her sister. I know it well. It is *the light of love!*

St. Vrain! His too are lit by a similar emotion! Happy St. Vrain! Happy that it is mutual. As yet he knows not that, but I do. I could bless him with a single word.

Moments pass. Their eyes mingle in

fiery communion. They gaze *into* each other. Neither can avert their glance. A god rules them—the god of love!

The proud and energetic attitude of the girl gradually forsakes her—her features relax—her eye swims with a softer expression—and her whole bearing seems to have undergone a change.

She sinks down upon a bench. Her back leans against the parapet. She no longer turns to the west. She no longer gazes upon the Mimbres. Her heart is no longer in the Desert land!

No; it is with her eyes, and these rest almost continuously on St. Vrain. They wander, at intervals, over the stones of the azotea—then her thoughts do not go with them—but they ever return to the same object, to gaze upon it tenderly—*more* tenderly at each new glance.

The anguish of captivity is over. She no longer desires to escape. There is no prison

where *he* dwells. It is now a paradise. Henceforth the doors may be thrown freely open. That little bird will make no farther effort to fly from its cage. It is tamed.

What, memory—friendship—entreaties—have failed to effect, love has accomplished in a single instant. Love—mysterious power—in one pulsation, has transformed that wild heart—has drawn it from the desert.

I fancy that Seguin has noticed all this, for he is observing her movements with attention. I fancy that such thoughts are passing in *his* mind; and that they are not unpleasing to him, for he looks less afflicted than before. But I do not continue to watch the scene. A dearer interest summons me aside; and, obedient to the sweet impulse, I stray toward the southern angle of the azotea.

I am not alone. My betrothed is by my

side; and our hands—like our hearts—are locked in each other.

There is no secrecy about our love. With Zöe, there never was.

Nature had prompted the passion. She knew not the conventionalities of the world—of society—of circles refined, *soi disant.* She knew not that love was a passion to be ashamed of.

Hitherto no presence had restrained her in its expression. Not even that—to lovers of less pure design, awe-inspiring above all others—the presence of the parent. Alone, or in their company, there is no difference in her conduct. She knows not the hypocrisies of artificial natures—the restraints—the intrigues—the agonies of atoms that *act.* She knows not the terror of guilty minds. She obeys only the impulse her Creator has kindled within her.

With me it was otherwise. I had shouldered society—though not much then—

enough to make me less proud of love's purity—enough to render me slightly sceptical of it. But through her I had now escaped from that scepticism. I had become a faithful believer in the nobility of the passion.

Our love was sanctioned by those, who alone possessed the right to sanction it. It was sanctified by its own purity.

We are gazing upon a fair scene—fairer now, at the sunset hour. The sun is no longer upon the stream, but his rays slant through the frondage of the cotton trees that fringe it; and, here and there, a yellow beam is flung transversely on the water. The forest is dappled by the high tints of autumn. There are green leaves and red ones—some of a golden colour, and others of dark maroon. Under this bright mosaic, the river winds away like a giant serpent, hiding its head in the darker woods of El Paso.

We command a view of all this, for we are above the landscape. We see the brown houses of the village, with the shining vane of its church. Our eyes have often rested upon that vane in happy hours; but none happier than now—for our hearts are full of happiness.

We talk of the past as well as the present —for Zöe has now seen something of life. Its darker pictures—it is true—but these are often the most pleasant to be remembered; and her desert experience has furnished her with many a new thought—the cue to many an inquiry.

The future becomes the subject of our converse. *It* is all bright, though a long and even perilous journey is before us. We think not of that. We look beyond it to that promised hour when *I* am to teach, and *she* to learn, "what is to marry."

Some one is touching the strings of a bandolon. We look around. Madame

Seguin is seated upon a bench, holding the instrument in her hands. She is tuning it. As yet she has not played. There has been no music since our return.

It is by Seguin's request that the instrument has been brought up—with the music to chase away heavy memories; or, perhaps, from a hope that it may soothe those savage ones, he fancies still dwelling in the bosom of his child.

Madame Seguin is about to play; and my companion and I go nearer to listen.

Seguin and St. Vrain are conversing apart. Adele is still seated where we left her, silent and abstracted. The chording of the instrument had already attracted her attention. She had looked upon it with a gaze of curiosity; but as yet no music had been played, and she had ceased to wonder.

The playing commences. It is a merry air—a fandango: one of those to which the Andalusian foot delights to keep time.

Seguin and St. Vrain have turned. We all stand looking in the face of Adele. We endeavour to read its expression.

The first notes have startled her from her attitude of abstraction. Her eyes wander from one to the other—from the instrument to the player—with looks of wonder—of inquiry.

The music continues. The girl has risen, and, as if mechanically, approaches the bench where her mother is seated. She crouches down by the feet of the latter, placing her ear close up to the instrument, and listening attentively. There is a singular expression upon her face.

I look at Seguin. That upon his is not less singular. His eye is fixed upon the girl's, gazing with intensity. His lips are apart—yet he seems not to breathe. His arms hang neglected, and he is leaning forward, as if to read the thoughts that are passing within her.

He starts erect again, as though under the impulse of some sudden resolution.

"O, Adele! Adele!" he cries, hurriedly addressing his wife, "O sing that song—that sweet hymn—you remember—you used to sing it to her—often—often. You remember it, Adele! Look at her. Quick! quick! O, God! Perhaps she may ——"

He is interrupted by the music. The mother has caught his meaning; and, with the adroitness of a practised player, suddenly changes the tune to one of a far different character. I recognise the beautiful Spanish hymn, "La madre a su hija" (The mother to her child). She sings it, accompanying her voice with the bandolon. She throws all her energy into the song, until the strain seems inspired. She gives the words with full and passionate effect:—

"Tu duermes, Cara nina!
Tu duermes en la paz.
Los angeles del cielo—
Los angeles guardan, guardan,
Nina mia!—Ca—ra—mi——"

* * * * * *

The song was interrupted by a cry—a cry of singular import—uttered by the girl. The first words of the hymn had caused her to start, and then listen, if possible, more attentively than ever. As the song proceeded, the singular expression, we had noted, seemed to become every moment more marked and intense; and when the voice had reached the burden of the melody, a strange exclamation escaped her lips; and, springing to her feet, she stood gazing wildly in the face of the singer. Only for a moment. The next moment, she cried in loud passionate accents "Mama! mama!" and fell forward upon the bosom of her mother!

Seguin spoke truly when he said "*Perhaps in God's mercy, she may yet remember.*" She *had* remembered; not only her mother, but in a short time, she remembered *him*. The chords of memory had been touched—its gates thrown open. She remembered the

history of her childhood. She remembered all!

I will not essay to describe the scene that followed. I will not attempt to picture the expression of the actors—to speak of their joyous exclamations, mingled with sobs and tears; but those were tears of joy.

All of us were happy—happy to exultation—but, for Seguin himself, I knew *it was the hour of his life.*

END OF VOL. III.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Vol. I., Page 1.

THE "WILD WEST."—In America the "east" and the "west" are fixed ideas, thus:—The Alleghany range traversing north-south, splits the *now settled* territory of the United States into two parts,—not exactly equal in territory, but soon to be in population—for in this the west *overtakes*. All who live east of the meridian of these mountains, understand by the "west" the countries that lie on the other side of the Alleghany; but especially the "settled" country—that is the "western states." When in New York, Philidelphia, Boston, or Baltimore, a man tells you he has been "out west," you know that he has been travelling in the States that lie westward of the Alleghany mountains. Conversely, were *you* in the west,—in Pittsburg, Cincinatti, Louisville or St. Louis,

and some one told you, he had "been east," you would then know that he had been travelling on the eastern side of the Alleghanies. It would not follow, that he had been in the "Eastern States;"—for by these are meant the six little puritan states of the north-east; called by Americans, and sometimes in contempt,—the "Yankee states." No. This would not follow. You would understand that the gentleman, who represented himself as having "been east" had been travelling in the states, Eastern included—that lie on the Atlantic side of the Alleghany mountains; and termed generally, the "Atlantic States,"—because most of them border on that Ocean. Among Anglo-Americans, these are the fixed ideas of "East" and "West."

The "far west," is a more fanciful and less definite appellation. It may be understood, as meaning the vast regions, that stretch westward beyond the "settled" frontier. For over a hundred years, the "far west" has been gradually receding—edged backward by the axe of the colonist. Fifty years ago, fancy placed it in the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi; but it has flitted back; and now you find it far beyond the banks of the great river. You will not reach it,

till you have crossed the Mississippi and approached the naked plateau-lands of America. There the "wild west" exists in all its primitive wildness; and will continue so for ages—perhaps for ever. Its borders cannot be pushed much farther.

The surface-aspect of the North American continent, offers some interesting peculiarities to the geognosist. I have not room here to enter into a detailed account of my own observations upon it; but one or two particulars are perhaps worth "noting,"—to the end that they may render my book more intelligible.

We will suppose a traveller crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific—along any parallel between 30° and 50° N.L. Suppose the time to be a hundred years ago,—before civilization had, in some degree, altered the natural features of the scenery. He will travel for the first thousand miles—or until he has reached the banks of the Mississippi—under the shadow of dark forests. He will see no mountains,—except the Alleghanies, or their continuity, and these clothed with forests to the summit, and presenting an aspect differing from that of any European mountains. In general, he will pass over a "rolling," "broken," or hilly surface; but with little variety of prospect—and indeed with

little prospect—as his view will be obstructed on all sides by trees. As far as the Mississippi, his journey will be a dead monotony; and, on some parallels, for a couple of hundred miles farther. Then, however, the woods will begin to "break,"—wide vistas will open before him—vast and verdant meadows belted by groves of tall trees. Through these he will travel two or three hundred miles farther—noting that the meadows grow larger as he advances, and the groves become scarcer and more distant. Another hundred miles on his journey, and not a tree will be in sight! On all sides of him will stretch the green prairie up to the sky's edge, and he can at any time view the full circle of the horizon wheeling around him. He may not be on a dead plain, but in a country of hills and "swells,"—a rolling country. Let him proceed from the banks of the Mississippi. He will be gradually, but imperceptibly going upwards; and this will continue, until he arrives at the "foot hills," of the Rocky mountains—when he will stand upon an elevation of nearly 4000 feet above ocean-level. Long before reaching this point, however, he will be struck with a change in the aspect-surface. He will note that the verdure gradually becomes less vivid—that the streams

grow shallower—some of them dried up altogether, or filtering into their own sands. He will cross wide stretches of naked earth, or sand, or perhaps salt incrustation. He will find himself surrounded by complete sterility—with no vegetation to rest the eye upon, but the silvery leaves of the *artemisia*, or stunted forms of the cactus. He will find himself traversing the great central deserts of America.

He has now crossed the vast territory watered by the Mississippi and its thousand tributaries. Since leaving the Alleghaines, he will have seen nothing that might properly be termed a mountain —unless he has travelled along one or two particular parallels.

During the rest of his journey it will not be so. He will witness a new geology. Mountains will be its characteristic feature.

Let him proceed. He will find a pass through the great spinal range of the Rocky Mountains. He will note many fertile valleys shut in by these mountains—watered by the rivers that are fed from their snows. But, coming out on the western side, he will see that these "parks' and valleys are only oases—for the desert again stretches before him. This desert, however, differs somewhat from that he has just crossed on the east.

It is more broken in its surface, and intersected by numerous mountain chains, whose bold profiles are constantly before his eyes. He will find rivers, too; some running among naked rocks, and others with timbered bottoms and oases upon their banks—but these are few, and far stretches the waterless waste between them. He will see the evidences of volcanic action. He will traverse plains covered with lava, and cut-rock, and sand, and salt, and soda, without one green leaf to cheer the prospect. He will see peaks towering up around him—some of them crowned with the "eternal snow," thus attesting their vast elevation; and these scenes will continue for hundreds of miles, until he finds his path obstructed by another main range of mountains—the Sierra Nevada. Having crossed these by a difficult pass, he will find himself once more in a wooded region—a country of tall trees—the tallest in the world—some of them growing to the height of nearly 300 feet!

But this is only a narrow strip of country; and having passed it, our traveller will stand upon the shores of the great Pacific.

Such are some of the features, which would have presented themselves to a traveller crossing the

continent of America before its colonization; and excepting the "forest-covered" parts of it, there is but little change to this day. That has been nearly all taken possession of by the white settler; and is now partially cleared of its timber, and altogether cleared of its ancient inhabitants. But once you have crossed the Mississippi, and emerged upon the prairies, the aspect is nearly the same as ever. Excepting the isolated oasis of the Del Norté, and the late Mormon colony on the Salt Lake, there is no settlement from the frontiers of the Mississippi to the shores of California and Oregon. For thousands of miles there is nothing but wilderness, traversed only by the trapper and the roving red man of the prairies. This, then, is the "Wild West."

Page 4.

THE "WEED PRAIRIE."—A "prairie" in its proper sense, is a tract of country naturally destitute of timber. It is antithetical to the "forest." There is, however, the "timber prairie," where the two mingle with and intersect each other; but of such a country, that part only is prairie where there are no trees—the "openings." On the timber prairies, the trees exist fringing the

streams. They generally indicate the presence of water. Not always. Sometimes they grow apart, in clumps, where there is no water. When standing thus, they are termed "islands," or "mottes."

The prairie is not always a plain. It is sometimes "rolling" and even hilly; but often, for miles, it is as level as the surface of a billiard table.

It receives distinctive names—according to the aspect of its vegetation. The "grass prairie" is purely a meadow. The term explains itself. Not so the "weed prairie" which is a sad misnomer. It is trapper phraseology. These gentlemen are not much given to the admiration of flowers, else would they have termed it the "flower prairie." Indeed, you may observe a "characterism" about the title—expressive of the contempt in which those practical men hold such trifles as flowers. The name, however, if not poetical, is appropriate. The prairie flowers do not grow as flowers are generally seen—arranged in beds and parterres—but in vast tracts, that suggest the idea of neglected flowers—in short "weeds." Let me not be understood as robbing them of their poetical character. The soul drinks in more

poetry from the *coup d'œil* of a weed prairie, than from all the artificial gardens in creation. If otherwise, the "weed" exists in the mind of him who views it.

The weed prairies are found in greatest perfection in the more southern latitudes of prairie land —particularly in Texas. There the traveller may ride through them for a whole day—the pollen of thousands of flowers shedding itself against the shoulders of his horse.

Many of the weed prairies are watered and timbered; and that is a land that fairly *beckons* the colonist. When the flower-stalks have withered—and they are mostly annuals—nothing is required to prepare the ground for useful production—nothing but the torch. The plough is superfluous —there is no turf. Of course wood and water are essentials to the "settler," but many of these prairies are intersected by streams, and belted by grove timber. When the Comanche has found that he can no longer hold these fertile fields for an *idle hunting ground*, they will become a true "garden of God"—a garden of cerealia for the support of millions of his creatures.

"Prairie-land" lies west of the Mississippi, though here and there it impinges on that stream;

and in the state of Illinois, east of it, is a feature of the surface-aspect. But the great prairie-country is found between the meridians of the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains. Here lies the "Grand Prairie;" here stretch the "Llanos estacados" (staked plains); here slopes the wonderful "couteau." This is the "range" of the buffalo and the wild horse. This is the home of the nomades—of the Sioux and Crow—of the Caw and Cheyenne—of the Pâné and Arapaho—of the Blackfoot, the Waco and Comanche.

A large proportion of this region is *desert;* but much of it, that is not so, can never become the scene of civilised life. I might show why; but a *novel note* does not allow me that opportunity.

Besides those already mentioned, trappers talk of the "sage prairies"—the plains where the wild wormwood, the *artemisia*, grows; of the "sand prairies," where nothing grows; of the "salt prairies" and the "soda prairies," where the country is covered for miles with salt, or soda efflorescence. All these last are ideas of the desert.

Page 7.

THE "WHITE SPANISH MOSS."—This is a creeping parasite found in the more southern

forests of the United States. It is of a silvery grey colour, and in its strands resembles fine wire or very coarse hair, slightly curling. It is used as a substitute for the latter by the upholsterers, and indeed nearly all the mattrasses to be met with in America are stuffed with it. They prepare it simply, by dragging it from the trees, and smoke-drying it—so as to season the moss itself, and kill the wood-ticks and jiggers (chicas) that live among its fibres.

A forest clothed with Spanish moss presents a singular, and indeed a melancholy appearance. The parasite grows in bunches, and hangs down in long silvery streamers from every limb. It is found, too, upon the tallest of trees; and, in the great cypress woods of the lower Mississippi, it forms a characteristic feature of the landscape. I have seen it, in its greatest luxuriance, in the forests of Lousiana and Texas.

Page 7.

"PROSTRATE TRUNKS."—In traversing the forests of America you meet with thousands of prostrate tree trunks in all stages of decay. These are called "logs." You are frequently under the necessity of making a wide circuit to get round

them, when they overlap each other. It is not possible to leap your horse over, as many of them are ten feet in diameter, and consequently form a fence at least ten feet high—rather a "rasper" I should think. Besides, it is risky to "top" them. There is no yield or break down; and the shod hoof has a tendency to cling in the wood. Under all circumstances, it is better to ride quietly about.

The "logs" are frequently "hollow," and serve as dens for the raccoon, the porcupine, the opposum, the ground squirrel, and the black bear. All of these animals seek refuge in them when closely pressed by dogs and hunters. Some of the standing trees, too, have large cavities in their trunks, particularly those of the sycamore or buttonwood species. I will here state two facts illustrating this peculiarity. In riding through a thick forest in the Tenessee "bottom," I chanced upon a squatter, who, with his whole family—a wife and two or three children—was living and actually *burning a fire* within the trunk of a standing sycamore! On inquiry, I learnt that the man—a tall, bearded, and singular-looking man he was—had passed the winter in this odd habitation. It would not confirm my statement to give the man's

name, though I remember it well, for I made his acquaintance and hunted deer with him afterwards. His name was Satterfield. He was a squatting hunter; and lived entirely on the produce of his long brown rifle.

The other fact is this. In the winter of 1840 myself and two friends, travelling in the Mississippi "bottom," spent the night with our three horses in the cavity of a buttonwood tree. Our horses were full-sized animals, and we had ample room for all! It was a cold heavy rain, that lasted through the whole night; and we preferred this shelter to sitting around a log fire, and getting soaked to the skin.

These statements may seem improbable. I cannot help that. They are hardly worth the trouble of finding proof for them; but any one who has bivouacked in the great western woods, will not question their veracity.

The traveller in the forests of the Mississippi is struck with the giant-like greatness of the trees—with their height, their collossal trunks and limbs, and the coarse scaly bark of which, on some species, there seem to be two or three separate layers, crisped and clinging over each other. The trees of the Mississippi valley, however, are but

dwarf shurbs to those found growing in California. Of the latter, a species of cypress, called by the Californians "Palo colorado" (red-wood), rises to the astounding height of nearly 300 feet, with a girth of between forty and fifty! But I will state the precise figures of a specimen measured by the United States topographical engineers, and reported to the government:—Height, 275 feet; diameter of trunk—at 3 feet above the base—15 feet. This is an official report, and the officer who made the measurement, adds: that there were other trees around still taller than this one; but that he had chosen to measure *it* from its greater apparent girth. You may the better imagine the colossal grandeur of a Californian forest, by remembering, that the trees, you are accustomed to look at rarely exceed a hundred feet, in height. Very few of those in the great forests of the Mississippi rise above a hundred and seventy or eighty. Fancy trees still a hundred feet taller!

Page 9.

"THE GOLDEN GREEN OF THE PAROQUET."—The paroquet or paroquette (Carolina parrot) is familiar to every one. The "oriole" is a beautiful bird, gracefully formed, and a musician, too. There are several species in the southern forests,

distinguished by their plumage. They are known by different appellations; as the "golden" oriole, the "Baltimore" oriole, &c. The "blue jay" is a bird common in the woods of America, and certain to make you aware of its presence by constant screaming, and fluttering about, as you pass. It keeps the lower branches, and often lights upon the ground. It is about the size of a thrush, of lively plumage—sky-blue and white—and somewhat magpie-like in its form. It is a great scolder of dogs, or anything that may annoy it. The "red bird" is a very common bird in the western woods. There are two birds of this colour—one a deep crimson, and the other of a bright scarlet. The latter is the more common kind, and that which bears the name "red bird." It also keeps the lower branches and thickets; and is a beautiful object seen glancing among the deep green leaves of the pawpaw. There are many other brilliant creatures that attract the eye of the traveller in the backwoods of America; but the reader must look to Wilson for their description.

Page 10.

"CHIRRUP OF THE CICADA."—The American woods are silent only in the dead of winter; but

in the more tropical forests of Lousiana and Texas there is no "dead of winter," and here the night traveller is struck with the peculiar and incessant noises that salute his ear from the tree-frogs and cicadas. Some keep up a continuous buzz, while others "chirrup" only at short, regular intervals. Their concerted voices at times almost interrupt conversation; and, when, in the neighbourhood of water, the great bull-frog is sure to be heard mingling his "croak" in the chorus. There is one species of the cicada which utters a very characteristic note. It is named by the people "cay-de-deet," from the resemblance of these syllables to its peculiar call. It utters them by repetition, nearly in seconds of time, and so loud, that on a quiet night it may be heard at least half a mile off.

I am acquainted with a strange truth in relation to this little creature. I know not whether I have the merit of being the first to discover it, but I have never heard of it elsewhere. I cannot explain its "philosophy," and I offer the fact to the consideration of some more accomplished naturalist. Thus, then. When the cicada is busy with his "chirrup," if you place your hand, or your finger only, against the tree on which it is perched,

it will abruptly cease its song, and remain silent. No matter how tall the tree, or how high the little animal may be up,—no matter how dark the night, or how silently you may have stolen to the tree and performed the manipulation—the song will be interrupted all the same! What is the explanation? The animal has not been affrighted by any noise you have made. You may utter what sounds you please *under* the tree—provided always you do not touch the bark—and it will not heed you, but continue its chirrup. What then? Can it be electricity?

Page 11.

"COYOTE."—The name by which the "prairie wolf" is known in the Mexican language. There are at least five species of the wolf in North America; but those more common on the prairies are the "white" wolves, and coyotés. The latter is a small animal—not much above the terrier size—and has a somewhat canine appearance, though without any of the good qualities of the dog. It is short-haired, of a reddish-brown colour, and ill-favoured aspect. The white wolf is much larger, and nearly white in colour. These are frequently seen in "packs," hanging after the buf-

faloes, which they attack when the latter get wounded or separated from the herd.

Page 12.

"THE GRIZZLY BEAR."—This is the most fierce and dangerous of American wild animals. Man is no match for him—even with his fire-arms to aid him. Twenty bullets have been fired into a grizzly bear without killing him. Almost every trapper has had his adventure —sometime or other—with a "grizzly;" and many of them bear the marks of it for the rest of their lives. Unless mounted—and then under advantageous circumstances—the trapper always allows "Old Ephraim," or "Caleb,"—as the animal is humorously styled—to pass free, giving him as wide a berth as possible. The bear can overtake a hunter on foot, though not on horseback. He is not generally disposed to begin the attack, unless roused suddenly from his lair, and believes himself treated with rudeness. When wounded, it is good for both man and horse to keep their distance of him; as he will drag the latter to the ground by main strength, and a single "hug" will be enough to settle the fate of the former. His claws are his weapons. These are curved like a

crescent, and frequently five inches from root to point. They are always worn blunt by the many uses to which they are put; but they are sharp enough—with the animal's strength behind them—to penetrate the hide of a buffalo, or tear the scalp from the skull of a trapper. The grizzly bear—unlike his black brother—is not a tree-climber—indeed, his home is rarely a forest country—but he can scale the cliffs and ledges of his mountain haunts with great agility. He is found amidst the wildest scenes of the "wild west," among the ravines and valleys of the Rocky Mountains. His colour is a dark brown with a grizzle, caused by a thin intermixture of white hairs. Hence his name.

Page 12.

"CARCAJOU."—Also written "Carcagieu." A rare and fierce animal found among the Rocky Mountains. It is a large species of the glutton, of a brown colour, with thick body and short tail. It is said to be a match for the grizzly bear himself, in a fair "tussle." The trappers dread it equally as much as "old Ephraim," and generally allow it to "take the wall." But there appears to be some superstition mixed up with their dread of the carcajou—which they consider as a

sort of triangular cross between a catamount, a grizzly bear, and the devil!

Page 13.

"THE BIGHORN."—The name by which trappers know the Rocky Mountain sheep. This animal is peculiar from the size of his horns—those of the male being frequently over a yard long, and in the form of a crescent. They are thick at the base, and taper regularly to a point. It is stated by trappers that they have seen this animal leap down fearful cliffs by bounding from ledge to ledge, and alighting each time on his horns.

Page 13.

"THE BALD BUZZARD."—There are two species of the "turkey vulture," or, more properly, the "turkey buzzard," in Western America. They are known as the "buzzard" and "carrion crow," but they are very like each other, about the same size, nearly of the same colour—a brown black—flock together, and follow similar pursuits. When stepping or standing around a carrion, it is difficult to tell "which from t'other;" but a practised eye will easily distinguish them, when spread out against the sky. The buzzard proper is more symmetrically formed, flies more gracefully, and

with less flapping of the wings. In fact, he wheels through the air as easily and gracefully—if not more so—as the eagle himself. It is interesting to watch the flight of the buzzard; and, thus engaged, I have lain upon my back for hours. He can perform that feat (of which I have not heard the philosophical explanation) better than any bird I ever saw,—I mean the feat of *ascending in the air without using the wings.* I have seen a buzzard sweep up an inclined plane, until he had changed his level at least a hundred feet, without once striking his wings—nay, without moving a pinion, or any part of his body, except in the absolute motion of his course! I am inclined to believe that this might be, not in a *plane,* but in an *upward curve* — perhaps the parabola? Plane or curve, it is to me unaccountable, although it may have been accounted for notwithstanding. I have not seen the explanation. I could fancy the capability of the bird thus ascending, had he obtained a "purchase," by descending from an equal, or higher elevation. But this is not so. I have watched them often thus soaring upward, after passing for some distance along a horizontal line. Whence comes the ascending power? Is it inflation?

In several of the Southern States the buzzard is protected by a statute, so that society may reap the advantages of a cheap scavenger. Consequently, in these places he is quite tame, often lighting on the houses and walls, and in the streets of cities, as in New Orleans and Mobile.

The "turkey" in his name is given, on account of his resemblance to that bird. He is not so large, however, as the turkey—about the size of a small female of the species—but in shape he is very similar; and the bald head, with the brownish black colour—a common colour among turkeys—gives him a very striking resemblance to the latter. The "carrion crow" is rather of a deeper black, shorter in the tail, and altogether a less symmetrical bird.

Page 15.

"MOUNDS."—There are several of these Indian tumuli above St. Louis. They are of course "lions," to be shown to all visitors of the Mound City.

Page 17.

"SPORTSMEN."—Gamblers—in western parlance.

Page 18.

"SANTA FE TRADERS."—The name given to those adventurous merchants, who, for many years past, have carried on an extensive caravan trade with the Oasis of New Mexico, and its capital, Santa Fé.

Page 21.

"TWELVE DOLLARS A BOTTLE."—An extravagant price, but not so high as a somewhat similar wine kept in the Astor Hotel, New York, which —the last time I dined there—I saw marked in the wine list at 23 dollars per bottle! I did not order any of it.

Page 29.

"A MUSTANG."—The mustangs—(Spanish mustenos)—are the descendants of the horses first carried to America by the Spaniards. They are smaller than the American or English horses, and much more beautifully formed. They are light limbed, with a neat hoof and broad counter. Their heads are small, with long, sharp-pointed ears, prominent eye, and wide open nostril. They are sure footed, and active as cats. They are tight and tireless. They prance and gallop gracefully; and, in truth, this last is the pace

in which they are generally ridden. They have full bushy tails, which they carry well; and they are of all colours of the horse—many of them pied and spotted like hounds.

They are best under the saddle, and, in fact, they are rarely put to any other use in Mexico—the roads forbidding any great amount of carriage travel. As a saddle horse, the mustang has his superior only in the Arab, or some of his crosses. Though much smaller than the latter, they have no resemblance to the English pony, nor the "cob," nor to any pony. They are really *horses* in every respect—horses of high blood and mettle, that you could not mistake for any plebeian or stunted race. It was their ancestors that aided Cortez in the Conquest; and the ancestors of them again, that bore the noble Moors through Barbary and Spain. Still they *are* inferior to the real Arabian. He can overtake them, or run ahead of them, either one.

The mustang is not met with in the Atlantic states, nor indeed in any of the states until you have crossed the Mississippi, except in the old Spanish settlements along the gulf—that is to say in Lousiana and Florida—where you find many of the race. West of the Mississippi, however, in Texas and

along the Missouri frontier you see them in great numbers. They have been brought thither from intercourse with the Mexican territory, and many of them have been captured from time to time on the prairies. There they are found wild, in droves —wild! aye, strange to say, the wildest animal on the plains! It seems as if they knew the harsh bondage to which man has doomed their kind, and keep the farther out of his reach. It is difficult to get near them on the prairie. It can only be done where there is copsewood or cover of some kind; as otherwise they will toss up their heads and gallop off long before the hunter can come near. Of course, with a horse travel-jaded it is impossible to "catch up."

They are best taken with the lasso, but this requires an expert hand mounted on a swift horse. They are noosed around the neck, and "choked down." The best in the drove are rarely caught in this way, as these are too swift to be overtaken. A hunter who knows not how to throw the lasso, resorts to the alternative of "creasing" them. This is done by wounding them with a bullet through the gristle of the neck, when they drop down as if dead.

It requires a good shot to drop them so that

they ever come to their feet again. The horse, however, is much injured by being "creased."

The wild ones are more properly the "mustangs," but the name is given by frontiersmen, to all horses of the Spanish or Mexican breed. These are the horses with which most of the "prairie Indians" mount themselves.

The best account yet given of the wild horse, as well as of most other things in *prairie land*, will be found in the pages of the *truthful* traveller, Catlin.

Page 31.

"CORALLED WAGONS."—It is usual for emigrants, or traders, who cross the plains, when halting for the night, to place their wagons so as to form with them a hollow square. This makes a ready fortification against Indian attacks; and also serves as an enclosure for such of their animals as are likely to stray. The word "corral" is used in such cases. It is the Spanish for enclosure; and it may be here observed, that as the Spaniards were the first Europeans who penetrated into these regions, much of the nomenclature of the prairies —particularly the southern prairies—is taken from their language.

Page 33.

"VOYAGEUR, HUNTER TRAPPER, AND COU-

REUR DU BOIS."—These are distinct followings. The voyageur is a Canadian idea; and is the designation of the boatmen, or canoemen, employed on the rivers of Canada. Their duty is to row parties of travellers—chiefly employés of the great fur companies—up and down the lakes and rivers of the wilderness, not yet approached by steam. There is a large number of these men, though not so many now as in the earlier times of north-western civilisation, before the dark woods echoed to the sonorous breathing of the steamboat.

I need not explain what a hunter is. Almost every man, whose home is on the American prairies, must needs follow hunting to sustain his existence. A "trapper," however, has long been a regular profession—not only with the employés of the fur companies, but with a class of strange men who have made their home in the wilderness. The name is derived from their mode of taking the beaver—by trapping—the fur of this animal being the principal object of their pursuit. The almost universal abandonment of the "beaver hat" has reduced the value and price of beaver fur; and a great number of trappers have now betaken themselves to other pursuits. Many of

them will no doubt be found at the present time in the gold "diggings" of California.

A "*Coureur du bois*" (wood-ranger) is a species of small trader who carries knives, beads, vermillion and tobacco, &c. into the wilderness, and there supplies the hunters, trappers, and Indians, out of his little wagon, taking beaver skins and other articles in exchange. It is a perilous calling; as the *Coureur du bois* is often murdered for the sake of his moveables.

Page 33.

"THE PRAIRIE FEVER."—A phrase used to distinguish that longing to return to the prairie wilds, experienced by those who have once lived upon them. It is not unlike the feeling which, at times, is said to come over the "salt ashore."

Page 36.

"PLUM BUTTES."—Butte— A name given to small isolated mountains that rise knoll-like from the plain. The "Plum buttes," near the "Bend," of the river Arkansas are celebrated land marks.

Page 54.

"MOUNTAIN MEN."—All who hunt, trap, or

trade, among the Rocky Mountains, and their "parks" are known as "mountain men."

Page 58.

"CANONED."—A Spanish phrase adopted into western parlance; a deep cleft, seemingly cut through a mountain ridge, with a stream running in its bottom, is a canon—pronounced kenyon. Canoned is the verb, and in use generally. The canon is a formation met with over all the surface of Spanish America. There is nothing exactly similar in the old United States' territory. It is a feature of the table lands.

Page 68.

"LARIAT."—A "Lariat," is a long rope of, most generally, twisted rawhide, used for "picketing" a horse, and other purposes. The lariat or laryette is nothing more than a "lazo," or "lasso" in the use of which the prairie Indians and all Spanish Americans are so skilled. But it has been so often described, it would be superfluous to give any account of it here. The "trail-rope," and "cabriesto" are similar things.

Page 70.

"GOATS."—A very unpoetical name for antelopes, but that by which the trappers choose to distinguish them.

Page 71.

"SANTA FE."—New Mexico is an oasis in the Great Desert—nothing more. It owes its fertility to the irrigating waters of the Del Norté, and a few lateral streams,—its tributaries. It is in fact, the valley of the Del Norté, ranging north-south through about two and a-half degrees of latitude, and walled in east and west by paralell ranges of the Rocky Mountains, with their sterile plains stretching behind them. Though much of the great desert is geographically called New Mexico, the name should be confined to this. The New Mexican valley is lost toward the north, by the parallel chains meeting and gathering into a "knot" around the Del Norté's head waters. On the south again—towards El Paso and Chihuahua—the fertile soil runs out—a sand desert taking its place for a stretch of 90 miles or more. This desert is the celebrated "Jornada del Muerte," or "death journey," and forms the natural boundary

of New Mexico on the south. Thus New Mexico is an oasis, and indeed tracts of sandy waste intersect it here and there, running out from its eastern and western boundary mountains; and sometimes stretching into the very banks of the river.

Its towns and villages, of which there are some twenty or thirty, are situated on the Del Norté, or near it. They are all insignificant places. Santa Fé—the capital—is the largest, and it musters only about 4,000 souls. In fact, the whole population is not over 25,000. These are mostly "Pueblos," the original inhabitants—a similar, if not the self same race as the Aztecs. The rest of the population is Spano-Mexican, or crosses between that and the Pueblos. The Pueblos are a civilized people—quite as much so as their Spanish fellow-citizens—though the latter are the "aristocracy" of the valley. The Pueblos are termed "Indios manzos" (tame Indians), to distinguish them from the "Indios bravos," a very dissimilar sort of animals—of which a word hereafter. The Pueblos live in towns and villages, irrigate and cultivate the soil, herd flocks of sheep and cattle, and make wine. Both their agriculture and manufactures are in the rudest state. So it is with their

lighter coloured neighbours of the Spanish breed. Their customs, both civic and religious, do not differ materially from those of the Indios Manzos of more Southern Mexico. They are a mixture of Spanish and Indian, of Christianity and Sun-worship.

We now come to speak of another kind of Indians, who, if they do not live in the New Mexican valley, occasionally "figure" in it. These are the "bravos" —the warlike Indians. Several tribes of them live around the Oasis of New Mexico, and plunder it at their pleasure. Along the plains, that stretch westward, roam the Navajoes (pronounce Nava-hoes), who make regular raids into the cultivated valley, and carry off with them horses, cattle, sheep, and female captives. Farther south, a kin tribe—the Apachés—follow a similar practice—extending their forays into the States of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango. From the east the Comanches, and their allies, the Kiowas, Wacoes, and Pawnèe Picts, make an occasional raid; and from the north descend the robbing tribes of the Utah. Thus it will be seen that the inhabitants of New Mexico are not in a condition to extend their wanderings far beyond their own proper boundaries. In fact, they never dream of travel-

ling out of the valley, or even from town to town, without going in a strong body. These Indians, had they combined, might at any time within the last twenty years have taken the country of New Mexico into their own keeping. But they do not want that. They prefer levying a periodical black mail; and, singular to say, they rarely strip a New Mexican of *all* his flock. They generally leave him enough to continue the breed. There have been many battles between them and their victims—ending always in treaties of peace—that are broken whenever the Indians deem it irksome to keep them. But what is more singular still is, that many Mexicans themselves encourage their plundering—that is, New Mexicans have been known to purchase the plundered goods obtained from Chihuahua and Sonora, and even to aid in obtaining them; and *vice versa* with the Chihuahuenos and Sonorenos. Nay, more than all—it has been fully proved that the late New Mexican governor was in secret league with the Navajoes; and that whenever he became displeased with any of his subjects, a hint given to the savages was sure to be followed by a plundering visit to the victim of gubernatorial vengeance! These things may seem incredible, to those who

know not the character of the Spano-Mexican race and their Indian enemies. Were the reader acquainted with the historical details of these countries for the last twenty years, he would not consider the sanguinary scenes depicted in this book as, in any way, exaggerated beyond the fearful reality. There was a time, however, when New Mexico was not thus unable to defend itself against Indian incursions—in the days of Spanish-American prosperity. It is a "gold and silver" country, as so are all the northern provinces of Mexico. That attracted the attention of the conquerors at an early period, and settlements were formed. There is no history of these to be found; but that the white race mastered the "Indios bravos," and predominated over all the region, is proved from the ruins of mine-buildings, churches, and towns, that in many places, now deserted, present themselves to the eye of the traveller. The decay of the Spanish power, both in Europe and America, accounts for all this. The revolution in Mexico and the distracted times that followed, caused the withdrawal of the strong *cueras* from the frontier, and the consequent abandonment of the mines and settlements. The Indians, still hostile, broke over them, destroyed both mines and missions; and, at the

present moment, the northern provinces of Sonora, Chihuahua, part of Cinaloa, parts of Tamaulipas and Leon, are returned to their pristine state,—that is, as they were before the conquest of Cortez —a hunting field for the roving red man.

It is not too much to say that, had the Mexicans been left to themselves—and the Indians as well—in less than another half century the Comanché and Apaché would have driven the Spanish race from the soil of Mexico!

In the treaty made at Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, between the United States and Mexico, one of the terms was: that the Americans should reduce these Indian tribes, and recover the Mexican white prisoners, that, to the number of 5000, were known to be in captivity among the savages!

Such is a picture of New Mexico, and the other northern provinces, as they now exist. But a change will soon come. The territory inhabited by these Indians has become the property of another power; and we shall soon hear of their being brought to such terms, as will end for ever their career of war and plunder.

Page 72.

"FANDANGO."—The fandango is a species of

Spanish dance, the object of which is to express by the movements of the dancer, the passions with which he pretends to be actuated. The name however, is used throughout all Mexico, when speaking of balls of a character little refined; and in short of any thing peculiarly moving and exciting—such as a battle. I remember well, when the American army was marching forward upon the city of Mexico, how the Mexican peasants along the road used to tells us, we might expect "mucho fandango," in the valley: and they told us the truth too.

Page 72.

"VINTAGE OF EL PASO."—Most excellent wine is made at El Paso del Norté. The grapes grown there are nearly as large as pigeon's eggs. Were it not for its interior situation, as well as the indolent habits of its people, the wine of this country would long since have been celebrated. There is a change taking place at this moment The valley of the Del Norté has passed into other hands, and no doubt the juice of these grapes will become a staple article of export produce.

Page 76.

"FONTAINE QUE BOUILLE."—The name of a

celebrated boiling spring near the head waters of the Arkansas. The nomenclature of prairie-land is nearly one half French. This is accounted for by the proximity of the French settlements at St. Louis and New Orleans, as well as the fact that many of the earliest prairie wanderers were of that nation. Canadian Frenchmen are to be found all over the western countries, and their traces may be detected in the progeny of almost every Indian tribe.

Page 83.

"CHIHUAHUA."—Pronounce, Chee-waw-wa,—a large interior town, capital of the state of that name, and like Santa Fe, deriving much of its supplies from the caravan commerce over the prairies. Population about 10 or 12 thousand.

Page 86.

"POBLANAS."—The "Poblana," is the Mexican "maja" or fashionable belle of the lower class. Her dress is exceedingly picturesque, and not over long in the skirt.

Page 87.

"SALA."—The Sala of a Mexican house is what we would term the drawing-room. It is that in which visitors are generally received, and not

the apartment kept for great occasions; any large room, such as a ball-room, is termed a "Sala."

Paye 87.

"BANDOLON."—The bandolon is a stringed instrument very much like a guitar. It is found in almost every Mexican house, and there are few, who cannot play a little upon it. It might be called a "cross" between the guitar and banjo, as it partakes of the character of both these instruments.

Page 89.

"PUROS."—Puros are simply cigars manufactured in Mexico. The name serves to distinguish them from the "Cigarros de papel," or small paper Cigarettos. The latter, however, are in much more general use among all classes of Mexicans, high or low, male or female. Havanna cigars are also smoked, but to no great extent. The little cartridge of paper is the favourite. There is also another kind in limited use, the "Campeacheanos," or husk cigarettes—that is those rolled in the husk of the maize plant. The "Mexican puros," are smoked extensively in London, under the name of "Pickwicks."

Page 88.

"TAOS WHISKEY."—Taos—San Fernando de Taos—is a Pueblo settlement in New Mexico, far north, near the head waters of the Del Norte. There are several "stills" at work here, chiefly managed by retired trappers.

Page 88.

"AGWARDENT, or VINO."—*Aguardiente*, for wine. Aguardiente is the Mexican name for strong drinks. Agua-ardiente—burning water. It is generally limited, however, to the whiskey distilled from the maize and mezcal plants—the latter peculiar to Mexico.

Page 89.

"CROW WOMAN ON THE YELLER STONE."—An Indian woman of the Crow tribe on the Yellow Stone River. It is not uncommon for the white men roving the prairies to "take up with" Indian women for their wives. Sometimes they purchase them, after the manner of the Indians themselves. Their prices vary according to rank and beauty, from a pound of tobacco, powder, or beads, to a rifle and half a dozen horses. These attachments

are too often of a temporary character—a divorce being easily obtained; but sometimes they exist for life, and are as faithfully observed as many a more sanctified contract.

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"MANGA."—A beautiful, cloak-like garment, worn in Mexico by showy rancheros, and also by men of a higher class. It is frequently of a bright colour—blue, sky blue, purple, and even scarlet. It hangs more gracefully than any other garment I know of. The head is thrust through a vent, and around this vent there is a circle of velvet, embroidered with cocentric circles of silk piping. Along its edge are silk or velvet fringes. But it is the peculiar "hang" of the *manga* which lends gracefulness to the garment, and this arises from the manner in which it is cut. It differs materially from the Spanish cloak—also worn very generally in Mexico. It differs, too, from the *serapé*, which is worn by every one of the middle and lowe classes. The latter is nothing less or more than a speckled blanket, with a short slit in the middle, through which the head is thrust, leaving the ends to droop over the shoulders. It is more firmly put together than the ordinary blanket, hand

woven, though lately they have got to weaving an inferior kind of them by machinery. I have seen *serapés* for which 150 dollars were asked, though the price of the cheapest is about two dollars. Yet it requires a Mexican to tell the difference by merely looking at both kinds. The price of the *manga* varies also with the cost of the cloth and velvet, out of which it is made.

The *rebozo* is another garment worthy of notice. It is altogether for female wear, and no Mexican female of the lower or middle classes is without one. It is simply a scarf about three yards long by half a yard in width, and fringed at both ends. It is a graceful enough garment, though it is rarely of a pleasing colour. It is universally seen of a dull lead like blue, or blue with an intermixture of brown. It is worn over the head, with one end allowed to hang down the side, while the other is "flirted" over the left shoulder. In this way the face of the wearer appears in a bonnet-like circumference of the rebozo, which may be contracted at will—still leaving one eye clear—until hardly any part of the countenance be seen. When worn thus, the face is said to be "tapado," or concealed.

The *calzoneros* are pantaloons open along the

outer seam from the hip down. But they can be buttoned up—as they usually are in cold weather—by castletops, or fancy buttons, sewed along the seams. The calzoneros are made of sheep-skin leather, cloth, or velveteen. When of velveteen they are beautifully embroidered about the waist and seams, and "fended" around the ankles with stamped and stitched leather. They are very wide at the bottoms, and tight fitting around the waist and hips. When buttoned up they have something of the "sailor cut." The tight buttoning around the waist confines them sufficiently; though a sash is generally worn—a silk sash of scarlet or crimson. The last is seen of different colours, though scarlet is most in fashion. The *calzoneros*, like the *manga* and *serapé*, can be had at all prices. Some pairs of them, with silver, or gold castletops, are of course very costly.

Calzoncillos are the wide drawers of white muslin that are universally worn under the calzoneros. They make a pretty effect, puffing out along the half-buttoned seams of the latter. Sometimes they may be seen made of white cambric, upon "ricos" and dandy "haciendados."

A long-tailed coat—dress or frock—is a thing

not to be seen in Mexico—unless in large cities, where among merchants the costume is *a la Francais*. The jacket is much worn also among these. But in the country and small villages the jerkin, or spenser, generally of dressed sheepskin is the upper garment. It is very short, leaving the shirt to puff out between it and the waist-scarf. Like the calzoneros it is sometimes elaborately ornamented and embroidered. Under it is a shirt profusely stitched and flowered with a broad sailor-like collar falling to the shoulders. We have noticed all but the sombrero and boots.

The "sombrero" is unique—not always of equal height nor obtuseness in the crown—but always broad-brimmed—for that is a sunny clime. It is manufactured of wool or felt, sometimes brown or grey, or whitish, but this is most generally covered with black glaze. A gold or silver cord, or band of lace, gives it a more picturesque appearance, and these are more or less showy and extensive. A couple of tags like a pair of small handles—silver or gold coloured—stick out from the sides of the crown, one over each ear. The sombrero is sometimes of great weight, and in the warmer parts of Mexico—the *terras calientes*—I have a belief, or a fancy, that it is worn still heavier than in the more cool regions. I am satis-

fied that I have handled sombreros in the hot lowlands of Vera Cruz and Tampico, not less than five pounds in weight!

The boots "botas" worn in Mexico are of tanned, but generally unstained leather. I mean those of the lower classes in the cities, and all those whose home is the country. The Indians still wear the native *guaraché*, or sandal; which is simply a piece of thick leather, cut rudely after the form of the sole, and strapped over the foot with leathern thongs. Many of the Indians, as well as the lower classes of city people—the leperos—walk about barefoot. The women of this class all go barelegged, but with the smallest satin slipper—blue or white—that can possibly be pulled over their very little feet.

While we are talking of foot-gear, we must not omit the spur. The spur is a great thing in Mexico—almost an "institution." They are of many varities, and some of them very costly. They are always very heavy—for what purpose no one can tell. I have seen spurs weighing several pounds to the pair, and with rowels over three inches in diameter! This is no exaggeration; on the contrary, I know I am stating under the mark, as I have no memorandum of the exact figures

by me. I am certain that the spurs of any ordinary *vaquero* or *arriero* will not be less than two pounds in weight with rowels, as I have stated. The rowels frequently carry a jingling appendage *campanillas*—little bells—which tinkle very agreeably to the ears of a *ranchero* horseman. It would be difficult to make good walking with these "heavy weights," but the *ranchero* does not contemplate the necessity of walking. The spurs are fastened in the usual way, with straps over the foot—but these last are of thick leather, broad and ornamented with stamping, or silver and gold wire embroidery.

Page 99.

"PELADO."—"Pelado" and "lepero" are names given in contempt to the lower and more ragged classes of a Mexican town. Pelado means a very naked fellow. A "lepero" is not a leper in the scriptural sense of the word, though "lepero" is the Spanish for that idea. But in common parlance among Spaniards and Spanish Americans, "leperos" are what among us are known as the "rabble," or rather the "tag-rag and bob-tail."

Page 101.

"HATED EACH OTHER."—This national hatred

is not peculiar to the Saxon and Spanish races of America. It is found, I believe, along the boundary frontier of every country. It needs no explanation.

Page 112.

"CACHE."—The term in use upon the prairies signifying to hide anything. Where anything has been concealed from the Indians or others, by being buried in the ground or hidden in the trees, the place is called a Caché. There is both the verb and noun. It is French phraseology, though used by all "mountain" men of whatever nation.

Page 115.

SAGUAN.—The passage or hall of the great doorway, leading into the patio of a Mexican house, is called the saguan. The "portero" usually has his lodge on one side of the saguan, or, if not, there is a stone banquette on which he seats himself. The *patio* itself is the enclosed space in the centre—around which are the rooms of the house, with galleries running along in front of them. There is usually a fountain and three or four ornamental trees—limes or oranges—around it. The *azotéa* is the roof—flat and cemented,

so as to cast water and form an agreeable promenade, or smoking place, when the sun is not too hot.

The *ventana* is the window, glazed only in cities, or in fine country houses; but glazed or no, always defended with heavy iron bars. These last form the *reja*.

Page 121.

"PLAZZA."—Every Mexican town has at least one square ("plazza") at or near its centre. The towns of Mexico are built in rectangular streets, very regularly laid out. In cities the central, or great square—plazza grande—has the cathedral on one side—the *palacio*, or governor's residence, and government houses, on another—and the municipality on a third. The fourth side is usually occupied by shops.

Page 121.

"ADOBES."—These are large bricks made from clay, with sometimes a mixture of grass or straw, but only dried in the sun. Three fourths of Mexican houses are built of adobés. Wherever there is no timber, the adobé is used instead; and this is the case over nearly all the table-land of Mexico,

which is not a timbered country. The villages are universally built of adobés, sometimes plastered and painted in brilliant colours; and in the greater cities the suburb houses are usually of this construction. It is not that sun-dried bricks are preferred to burnt ones, but there is no choice. Where houses are so built, fuel is always scarce, and brick burning would be too costly. An adobé house is nothing more or less than a mud house.

In the mountains, where the timber is large, log houses are common; and in the Tierra Caliente, where anything may serve for a shelter, frail cane structures take the place of the adobés.

Page 121.

"RANCHERIAS."—A "rancheria" is a collection of ranches—a hamlet. The ranche, or rancho, is, properly speaking, the cottage of the small cultivator, or "ranchero." The "Hancienda" is the big mansion of the "rico," or lord of the estate, called the "*haciendado.*" Sometimes a large building or establishment is called a ranche, and not unfrequently a collection of buildings, resembling a small village, passes under that title, as:—the "Ranche of San Antonio," "The Ranche of San José," &c.

Page 121.

"PILES OF PRICKLY PEARS."—The fruit of several species of the cactus is sold and eaten in Mexico—"Tunas" they are called. One species, the fruit of the *pitahaya* cactus, is exceedingly pleasant to the taste—not unlike strawberries, both in colour and flavour.

Page 122.

"CHILE."—Chilé is a universal article of the Mexican cuisine. It forms an ingredient in almost every dish. There are several species of the plant, but are all extremely pungent. The parts used are the pods, which are of different shapes and colours, according to the species. Some are scarlet when ripe, while others preserve their hue of dark green. Some pods are round-shaped like a potato, while others are oblong; and still a third species of chilé produces small pods, like those of the French or kidney bean. The chilé grows upon a vine—an annual—planted in rows or drills. Whole fields of it are cultivated throughout America, and it forms one of the staple "relishes" of the poorer classes. Of "*tomatoes*," there grow two kinds in Mexico—the scarlet tomato of the United States, and a smaller species, very much like the apple of the common potato.

"Leché," milk. "Carbon," charcoal—much used in Spanish America.

"Agua," water. "Pan fino—pan blanco," fine bread—white bread.

"Huevos," eggs. "Atolé," a species of gruel, manufactured from the maize.

Page 122.

"TORTILLERA."—The baker of "tortillas." The tortilla has been often described. It is the bread of the Mexican people. Although made from Indian corn, it differs altogether in taste from the "corn bread" of the United States. That difference is caused by the way in which it is prepared. Thus:—the maize is not sent to the mill, but boiled in its unbroken state, in an olla or earthern pot. To soften it, a small quantity of "lye" or potash is thrown in—hence the peculiar flavour of the bread. When boiled soft, the tortillera kneels by her metaté—a flat stone with slanting surface—and placing a portion of the maize upon this, bruises it into a pulp with another stone resembling a roller. The "dough" thus formed is of a snowy whiteness. It is next "clapped" between the hands into thin round cakes about the size of a small plate, and thrown

upon a hot stone or griddle. An instant serves for the hardening, as the corn has been already cooked in the boiling. The cakes remain tough and limber as long as they are warm, and then they are eaten—for the baking of tortillas goes on at the same time with the eating of them. Cold tortillas—hard and brittle and bitter they are—can be "warmed up" again, by being dipped in water, and submitted to a fresh turn upon the griddle.

The tortilla is the food of many millions of people. It is eaten all over Mexico, but it is patronised more particularly by the poorer classes. They make it serve the double purpose of a viand and an implement to eat with. With a piece of tortilla twisted in the form of a scoop, they raise to their mouth the molé or other peppery stews they are so fond of; but at each mouthful, the temporary spoon disappears, and another takes its place.

In the large cities "tortilleras" may be seen sitting at the corners of streets and in the plazzas, baking and selling tortillas, daubed over with a red coating of "Chilé colorado."

Page 129.

"Closed his Fingers."—When speaking of

robbers, a Mexican usually shuts his fingers with a quick jerk, to indicate the forcible grasping of something. Many of the signs used in talking by these people are very significant. The forefinger passed once or twice slowly in front of the eyes, is a negative answer, though not a word be spoken.

Page 130.

"ZEQUIAS."—"Acequias," or "Zequias," are the artificial viaducts and canals used in different parts of Mexico for irrigation. Through these, the waters of the Del Norté, are diverted out of their channel, and spread over the fields. To the "irrigation system," New Mexico owes much of its fertility.

Page 131.

"STRIPED BLANKET."—This is similar to the "serapé," except in its colouring, which is sufficient to characterise it. It is simply broad bands of black and white alternating with each other. The serapé is a mixture of the gayest colours; speckled and oddly arranged, but never in flowers. Out of a thousand patterns, I do not think I have seen a flowered serapé.

Page 132.

"ARRIEROS."—An "arriero," is a mule-driver or muleteer. The arrieros form a large class in Mexico; as there, almost all goods are carried upon pack mules. They are a good sort of men, and in general bear most excellent characters. Their dress is very picturesque, but differing only in a few points from that of the ranchero which we have described. A drove or band of pack mules is an "atajo." Frequently you may see several hundreds of these travelling together, each carrying his "carga" of 300lbs.

They are trained to follow the leader or "bell-mule"—and to lie down until the load is packed on them, when they are helped up by one or more arrieros. The packs themselves—"alparejas"—(pronounce alparéhas) seem heavy enough for a load. They are fastened firmly with a strong girting, and a breech strap—"apishamore"—usually embroidered with the owner's name or initials.

When an atajo is halted for the night at a "paraje," or arrieros' inn, the packs are placed upon the ground, in a long regular line; and a trough of canvass—stretched upon three or four forked uprights—is filled with maize for the

animals. There are few pictures more striking to the traveller than an atajo of pack mules, with their "arrieros" halted for the night at a Mexican "parajé."

Page 133.

"POSADAS."—The "posada" answers nearly to our "country inn." The "fonda" is an establishment of higher pretensions, and in Mexican towns supplies—but very badly indeed—the place of a hotel.

Page 133.

"PUEBLO."—A "pueblo" is a town. A "pueblito" is a still smaller town or village, though "aldea" is also a village.

Page 133.

"APACHES."—Pronounce "Apashées."

Page 137.

"MOZO."—A Mexican boy or waiter. "Peons," labouring Indians are so called.

Page 139.

"XUAGES."—Gourds used for carrying water on a journey. They are in use all over Mexico.

They keep the water sweeter and more cool than a tin canteen. A "double headed" gourd is the best, as it can be strapped around the "waist," or small part, and thus hung over the shoulders of the traveller.

Page 159.

"THE SPANISH HARP."—This instrument is very common in Mexican houses of the better class. It is a smaller kind than that known as the Irish harp; but in other respects, as far as I could see, precisely similar.

Page 170.

The Campeachy chair is a peculiarity. The extension of the back, which curves slightly, forms the front legs of the chair, crossing the others after the manner of a camp stool. I cannot describe it intelligibly. It resembles a species of rocking-chair, used in America; not the large rocking-chair, but a smaller and cheaper kind. The "Campeachy," however, is not a rocker.

Page 170.

"THE PETATE."—The mat plaited of palm leaves—sometimes *tule* (bulrush). It is as thin as a piece of carpet; but over all Mexico a petaté,

spread on the floor, forms the sole bed of the humbler classes.

Page 173.

"TILED FLOOR."—There are few Mexican houses with wooden floors. These are generally of bricks or tiles—not carpeted, but often painted in gay patterns, as though they were. These floors, in a warm climate, are much preferable to wooden or carpeted ones.

Page 195.

"COTTON-WOOD."—The great cotton-wood tree the characteristic timber of much of the prairie land. On many of the river "bottoms" no others are found. The cottonwoods are so called from a downy substance which they shed resembling cotton, or the floss of the thistle.

Page 197.

"GILA."—Pronounce Heela. This river rises in the Mimbres mountains, near the 32nd parallel of north latitude, and runs a westward course, through a rocky, desert region. It unites with the Colorado, about fifty miles from the embouchure of the latter in the Vermilion Sea.

Page 209.

The horrid details given in this page are true—are facts—but Seguin was not the author of these atrocities, as he declares. They were perpetrated by other men—fiends rather—belonging to a race and country that boasts of its higher humanity. But the crimes of such men as Johnston and Kirker—men who figured in these brutalities—cannot be chargeable to their country. Such men are exceptions—the monstrosities of their kind.

Page 216.

"VAQUERO."—A "Vaquero" is a ranchero or countryman, who looks after cattle. As Mexico is chiefly a grazing country it will be seen that there are many of its inhabitants employed in this pursuit. The vaquero is always mounted, and generally well dressed. He carries the lazo constantly; and he is the man, above all others, who can use it with dexterity. He can fling it over a bull's horns twenty yards off, or loop it round the foot of the animal when going at a full gallop! This feat I have witnessed a hundred times. Your vaquero is also expert in the game of "Colea de toros," or "bull-tailing"—that is, he can, on horseback, catch the tail of a running bull—whip

it under the hind leg—and fling the animal on its back! This feat also have I witnessed over and again. The vaquero takes his name from "vacas," signifying cows or cattle.

Page 218.

"PRESIDIOS."—Garrisons kept along the Indian frontier, to protect the mines and missions. Of late years—or ever since the downfall of the Spanish power—they have been ill kept; and, in fact, served but little purpose—as, upon any hostile demonstration of the Indians, the presidio soldiers were sure to shut themselves up in their strongholds, and leave the settlers to take care of themselves. The country around the presidios is now completely depopulated from the dread of the Apache and Comanche.

Page 219.

"NORTH OF THE GILA."—The triangle lying between the Gila, Colorado, and Del Norté—a fearful desert—is less known than any part of the North American continent. The United States' government is about exploring it at the present time.

Page 220.

"GATES OF DURANGO."—The Comanches did

"harry," to the very gates of Durango in 1846. They fought one "pitched battle" with the Mexican soldiers, and completely routed the latter. In this battle, the Indians followed a system of manœuvres, and actually charged several times in cavalry line!

Page 226.

"¿YUCA PALM."—The yuca, or palmilla, is a very picturesque object in the vegetation of the table lands. From its roots the New Mexicans manufacture a kind of soap.

Page 230.

"BLAZED."—Trees are "blazed" to mark a pat or boundary, by a piece of the bark being chopped out with an axe.

Page 231.

"FRAGMENTS OF POTTERY."—These are found in all ruins of Mexican towns or settlements—pottery being a common and plenteous article in use for kitchen utensils. The art of making it, and staining it with a fast dye, was known to the Aztecs; and among the Aztec ruins on the Gila, much of this is found still retaining its original tints.

Page 260.

"CIBOLEROS."—The "Ciboleros" of Northern Mexico, are men who employ their lives in hunting the buffalo for his flesh. They also trade for it with Indians, and then carry it to the settlements for sale. The "Ranchero" is a Mexican countryman, above the order of the serf or peon. He is the vaquero at times, or the arriero, or he may be possessed of a small holding, and farm it for himself. He is a great horseman, and always mounted, galloping after cattle, or amusing himself in some other way. The vaquero is also a ranchero; so, too, is the montero, who is so called from living in a mountainous district.

Page 263.

"PARFLECHE."—The thick sole leather made from the hide of the buffalo is so termed in prairie-land.

Page 268.

"BLOODY GROUND."—Part of the valley of the Ohio has been so called, in times past, from the terrible battles fought there between the early colonists and Indians.

Page 268.

"THE DESTINY OF THEIR RACE."—The total extinction of the "red" man has been pronounced inevitable. His doom has been declared by a thousand prophets. It has served for the peroration of many a poetical period—for the "wind up" of many a sympathetic speech, more eloquent than truthful.

I do not believe that the Indian race is destined to die out. I do not believe that any race possessing the organization of manhood so perfect as they, can be "shuffled" from the earth's surface so easily.

I can conceive of the Aztec Indians dying out, and their Spanish conquerors following them fast. I can conceive of the Greeks disappearing, and the Italians too; but that a race of strong bodied men—such as the black Africans, or the North American Indians—could appear upon the earth, and then disappear—without having passed the "hunter state"—without having fulfilled their mission—is what I cannot believe.

It is true that their history since the colonization of America seems to point that way. Whole tribes, as the Huron and Iroquois, are no longer to be found; and others, as the Delaware or the

Seneca, exist only in remnants. Indeed, all the tribes, who have come in contact with the European, seem more or less to have lost ground; and this fact, with the still accelerated spread of the European race, does seem to herald the total extinction of the aborigines of America. This, however, is but the sophism, that lurks beside the truth, or rather stands in front of it, obscuring the latter.

What is the cause that these tribes have so suddenly perished from the land? Let us inquire. We will find it to be somewhat different from that usually alleged.

The colonization of America was evidently a "destiny" of the European race. I mean by this that it was plainly a "right." I will not attempt to justify the manner of the deed as carried out by either Spanish, French, or Saxon. With regard to some of the colonies of the latter, I could defend their proceedings through all; even against the so much talked of "Indian right," the right of prior possession. Man in the hunter state must depend on the wild animals for sustenance. It will be seen that a tract of country, large enough to supply a whole nation in this precarious way, must be a large tract indeed. Where the agricul-

turist can find abundance from a small patch of an acre or two, the mere hunter savage must have a whole domain allotted to him; otherwise he will starve. Were all mankind, as they are now numbered, to return suddenly to the hunter state, the earth would not keep them for a single year. Agriculture is therefore a necessity of the human race; and it has constantly developed itself wherever population became dense, and necessity called for it. In the time of Columbus, the North American Indian did not feel this necessity to any great extent. His territory was vast, and supplied him with food spontaneously—although, even then, he had his intervals of suffering from the very precariousness of hunter life. He was master of a continent, and refused to cultivate it.

Now, suppose that the European discoverers of America had respected to its full extent the so-called Indian right, they would not have colonized America. It would still have been a vast wilderness, or in the rudest state of incipient tillage. The earth's surface would have exhibited a singular spectacle. Eight hundred millions of people crowded together on one continent, while the other was in the possession of some twenty millions of savages, who used it only for a vast hunting field!

Standing upon their right of priority—had it been acknowledged and respected—the Indians might have held America as a waste to this day, and what could have been more absurd than to have permitted this. Taking the Indian territory by force was also a "right" of the European colonist—that is whenever the Indian refused to sell it or use it himself. No handful of men have the right to hold from the great body of mankind a valuable portion of the earth's surface, without *using* it. But we have not space to follow this argument. We adduce it to justify the act of European colonization, so much cried down.

Colonization once begun, the Indian hunting ground was encroached on. The animals became shy and scarce. A new enemy appeared in the white hunter, who with his deadly weapon, slaughtered them by wholesale; and the Indian starved in consequence. *He* disdained the useful tillage of the soil, as an occupation unworthy of his lordly nature. He looked upon it as fit work only for squaws; and standing upon this proud vanity, he could get nothing to eat, and starved. This is the true cause of the extinction of the great eastern tribes of North America—their own ill-starred vanity, and not the necessity under which colonization placed them.

But has this vanity been universal? Must they all perish? By no means. If you look to the countries that lie west of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri, you will find the answer. There the wise tribes of the Choctaws and Chickasaws, the Creeks, and Cherokees, as well as many others who have bought wisdom by experience, will point to a far different destiny. These people are to be found living in towns and villages, cultivating large plantations of maize, and cotton and wheat. They are to be found engaged in all the occupations of civilised life. You will find them busied in educating themselves and their children—and already has the newspaper, printed in their own language, and edited by one of themselves (a son of the Creek Chief Ross) made its appearance among them. Nay, more than all, it will be startling to an Englishman to hear, that millions of his starving fellow-countrymen, on the other side of the Irish Sea, have been fed for years past by these very Indians whose race is so soon to perish! In 1846, the Chickasaws alone, shipped 200,000 bushels of Indian corn—their superfluous produce—to famined Ireland! This, to me, does not look much like the extinction of the Indian race. There

is no fear of such a consequence. The other tribes also begin to see the necessity of forsaking their wild habits and vanities, and settling down to the true business of life. When they have made up their minds to that, instead of their decreasing, we will find them increasing in number, and forming, at no distant day, an important amalgam with the Anglo-American race.

Page 272.

"THERE WERE MEN OF EVERY HUE."—It is a strange fact that to this region—most remote from any country—men of almost every country have wandered, and become part of its nomade population.

Page 273.

"TILMAS."—The "tilma" is a sort of blanket shirt, without any "cut" about it. It looks like a short bag, with the bottom taken out, and holes made in the sides for the arms to pass through. It is altogether a garment of the very humblest class—the Indian peons.

Page 274.

"GRUJA."—A species of small bluish crane, found all over the table lands of Mexico.

Page 275.

"KILBAR'S MUZZLE."—Kill-bear, the name of his gun. It is common among the mountain men to name their rifles after such a fashion.

Page 277.

"ERMINE SKINS."—The white ermine is found over all prairie land. Its skins are used by the Indians to trim their shirts, and form pendant fringes. Frequently an Indian will have more than a hundred of these valuable skins stitched over his dress.

Page 278.

"THE WHITE BUFFALO ROBE."—The white buffalo is an Albino of the bison tribe. His colour is not exactly white, but "whitish inclined." However, it distinguishes him sufficiently from the rest of the bison tribe to entitle him to the name. They are very rare, and their skins or robes are valued in proportion. It is no easy thing to come across the skin of a white buffalo.

Page 280.

"KILBARS, A NINETY."—The rifles in use among hunters are usually of very small bore, the bullet sometimes not larger than a drop of buck or swan

shot. There is a reason for this, and a good one too. Such a shot, properly directed, will do the business for either man or beast. But it offers this advantage over the larger bore. A trapper may be necessitated to live in the wilderness for a year or two at a time, with no post or settlement within hundreds of miles of him. How, then, could he carry a sufficient supply of lead, unless by using a very small bore rifle? This, I take it, is the solution of the matter, though I never heard the thing spoken of among the trappers themselves. The small bore seems to have come to them by instinct.

Page 284.

"BENT'S FORT."—A celebrated trading depôt on the Upper Arkansas. It was owned by the brothers Bent. One of these is spoken of in our pages. His brother, after New Mexico fell into the hands of the United States, was made governor of that country. But he lived but a short time to enjoy his honours. He was killed in a revolution of the New Mexicans and Pueblos, which occurred while the American troops were engaged in making a conquest of El Paso and Chihuahua. The revolution was crushed soon after, and his death was avenged in a terrible manner.

Page 297.

"POOR BULL."—Poor bull—that is, buffalo bull—is the phrase used by the trappers to denote very poor living indeed. "Fat cow" is the antithetical idea.

NOTES TO VOL. II.

Page 22.

"AZUL AND PRIETO."—Tributaries to the Gila—running in from the North.

Page 25.

"ESCOPETTES."—The escopette is a short piece—used generally as a horseman's gun. They have strap and swivels, and many of them are merely razeed muskets. They were much used in the late Mexican war; as I have some reason to remember.

Page 45.

"CAVAYARD."— The trappers' idiom for *Caballada*, which means, a drove of horses, or horses and mules. A drove of mules alone is called

mulada; and a number of mares together is sometimes termed a *manada.*

Page 45.

"MUSQUITE."—Mezquite Rube means—a species of acacia, found through all parts of the arid table lands of Mexico. It is a thorny bush, as almost every bush of the desert is. There are many other varieties of the acacia tree found in the Mexican territory.

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"THE NUT PINE."—The pinon, or nut pine, is a variety of pine whose cones are edible, and when roasted and pounded, make excellent bread. It is found growing all over the western mountains of America, from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. It grows in abundance in many parts of California. The Indian tribes, who dwell where it grows, gather the cones, and lay up a stock of them for winter subsistence. The tree differs considerably in appearance from other varieties of the pine. Pinon is pronounced peenyon.

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"TASAJO."—Jerked meat. The process of jerk-

ing meat is as follows:—The meat is cut in long strips, and hung over a line in the sun. It thus becomes dried before decomposition can take place; though "tasajo" usually gives one ideas that this has partially done so—if we are to judge by the smell. Tasajo is found in most countries where there is a scarcity of salt, as there is in most parts of Mexico, while in other parts again, it may be gathered in wagon loads. But the want of roads and communication between the cities and salt districts, render it cheaper to import the article from abroad.

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